PLOTINUS' SEARCH FOR THE GOOD

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TO MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to penetrate behind Plotinus' statements to the *problems* that faced his philosophy. This is no simple task because in Plotinus, as in much of Platonism, dialectic and an unavowed symbolism prevent much of the real problems from being directly stated. Perhaps the most basic difficulty is the intertwining of existential and valuational considerations. "Reality," as Professor Herbert W. Schneider has recently remarked, "is not only a weasel word, but a foxy concept. It has all the smart appearance of ideality but the beastly habit of devouring actuality." In Plotinus a paraphrase rendition of his philosophy will give us a phantastic system of levels of reality: a natural world, a noumenal world, and a One that is the crown and the stupendously productive source of all that is. It will give us a description of the "worlds" above the natural world that contains still more of the marvelous. But one chief key to Platonism is to read its levels of reality as levels of value. For the sake of anticipatory simplification this may be described as the method of this book. It should be noted that the author discovered the "key" last. For his first reading of Plotinus was one of puzzlement, and only a laborious analysis brought the disentanglement of the experience from the vision of Plotinus that this book attempts to state.

This book then deviates from the usual approach to Plotinus in that it is less concerned with the interrelation of his ideas and the architecture of his system than with the experiential reference of his ideas. It treats Plotinus' dialectic less for its own sake than to show its function in bridging the inevitable inconsistencies that arise when valuational and existential considerations are not clearly distin-

guished. But it should be kept in mind that a treatment of Plotinus in terms of the dialectic of his ideas is not untrue to the spirit of this philosopher. Dealing with ideas apparently was the most intense and focal *experience* of Plotinus. When Plotinus and many Platonists speak of the good, it is intellectual activity that has a predominant place, as the sequel will try to show for Plotinus. This book then neglects, without disparaging it, that side of Plotinus, richly dealt with by others, which is constituted by an imposing and complexly interrelated system of ideas. It should also be stated that it was not necessary to add a bibliography as the two recent bibliographies by Mariën and Switalski, referred to in the Notes, fill this need admirably.

The beginnings of this study date back to the year 1943-1944 when as a University Fellow at Columbia University I began intensive readings in Greek Neoplatonism. I owe much to the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University as a whole; for I have learned much both from its individual members and the co-operative discussions that are carried on regularly. Professor Paul O. Kristeller has been most closely associated with the present study. Our discussions were innumerable and I came to admire particularly the intellectual tolerance with which he tried to help me say more adequately things with which he himself in certain respects disagreed. He has been a kind and generous friend throughout. My intellectual and personal debt is great to Professors Irwin Edman, John Herman Randall, Jr., and Herbert W. Schneider. This account of indebtedness would not be complete without mention of Dean Glenn R. Morrow of the University of Pennsylvania whose Aristotle seminar and kind encouragement started me on the present path. My brothers, Jay Katz, M.D., and Norman Katz have read this work both in manuscript and proof form and have in this and in other ways given good help. I should like to think of this book as a contribution towards that rewriting of the history of philosophy which is now going on, at

Columbia and elsewhere, under the impact of the enlarged perspectives of contemporary philosophy. But of course the responsibility for what I say is entirely mine.

J. K.

New York City
June 25, 1950

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CHAPTER I

THE PREPARATIONS FOR PLOTINUS IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

IN his image of the cave Plato compares the world of ordinary existence to a dark prison in which shadows are taken for realities. Obscurantism marks both the opinions and the values of the prisoners. It is Plato's great attempt through the development of knowledge and the reform of society to break down the walls of the cave and the spurious existence they enclose. There is no doubt that for Plato, however one might otherwise interpret his writings, the achievement of the Good included an active participation in the political and social affairs of the state. We know from his life that his own attempts in this direction failed. We know from his own words[1] the increasing discouragement with which he viewed the political ineffectualness to which philosophers seemed to be condemned. This discouragement, deepened and rationalized, became a dominant characteristic of post-Aristotelian philosophy which held that the Good was to be realized more fully, not through active reconstruction, but through acceptance and detachment. There are notable exceptions to this emphasis on tranquillity and peace of mind in a world in which there was neither peace nor much reason. In particular, Cicero's stress on the philosophical qualifications of the statesman should be mentioned. But on the whole, Hellenistic philosophers were willing to seek wisdom in the retreats of their intellectual gardens and lecture halls.

It is with Plotinus and his teacher Ammonius Sakkas that we date the beginning of Neoplatonism. The term "*Neo*platonism" is a product of modern scholarship. It marks the recognition of doctrinal

differences within the Platonic movement, in particular differences between Plato himself and the "Platonists" (a recognition which has not even yet been followed through in all its implications). Nevertheless, this distinction is not one which Plotinus himself would have accepted. He rejects the imputation that he is introducing a *new* doctrine.[2] Plato is the uncriticized master whose theories serve as the subject matter of discussion. The *Enneads* are full of references to his writings, often introduced by a simple "he says" reminiscent of scholastic references to "the philosopher." Even seeming inconsistencies in Plato's writings do not detract from his authority. Plotinus' handling of such inconsistencies, as well as of other passages in Plato which appear to conflict with his own doctrines, seems to indicate that he regarded them as challenges to the interpreter and not as signs of any flaw in Plato's doctrine.[3]

Yet one will seek in vain in the *Enneads* for a discussion of many topics characteristic of Plato, such as make up, for instance, the bulk of the *Republic*. Plotinus ignored the whole socio-political side of Plato's thought. There is not even a defense of such an omission. But even those parts of Plato's doctrine which Plotinus discusses are interpreted in ways which the modern critic often will find difficult to accept (though the wide variations of Plato interpretations make the degrees of acceptance very different). Plotinus seems to find a text in Plato for every one of his major doctrines. But these texts, frequently brief, often are the obscurer passages or incidental remarks. There is hardly any regard on Plotinus' part for the contexts in which these passages occur. One is reminded of the great attention which tradition has paid to the unmoved mover of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* or the *nous* of the third book of the *De anima* at the expense of the bulk of other discussions which were more clear and unambiguous. The interpreters sought in Aristotle what they themselves were most interested in. Plotinus has done likewise with Plato, particularly as he could look at him through the eyes of a long tradition of reinterpretations.

From such a perspective Plato's writings seemed to contain all of Plotinus' major doctrines. That the Good was beyond the level of true Being could be found attested in a passage of the *Republic*.[4] A sentence in the second *Letter*[5] seemed to declare the hierarchical order of levels of realities originating in one supreme cause. The first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*[6] put the One beyond motion and rest, beyond space and time. It was beyond the grasp of sensation, discursive reason, or knowledge. The purification of the *Phaedo*[7] pointed the way upwards to an unmixed enjoyment of the superior ways of existence. The *Symposium*[8] and the *Phaedrus*[9] provided terms and imagery descriptive of such an experience. The description of the "loss of wings" in the *Phaedrus*[10] illustrated the descent of the soul and its embodiment. A sentence in the *Theaetetus*[11] seemed to summarize all of Plotinus' moral theory: "Evils can never be eliminated. For the good must always have its corresponding opposite. Evils have no place in the divine world, but they necessarily infest our mortal nature and this mortal region. Hence one must try to flee from here to the beyond as soon as possible. This flight consists in the assimilation to the divine as much as is possible, and such assimilation consists in becoming just and pious with the help of wisdom."

The passages just referred to belong to the most frequently mentioned in the *Enneads*. It must be left to the interpreters of Plato to determine more fully the extent to which they are indicative of the central emphases and central problems of Plato's thought. To us they indicate at any rate Plotinus' conception of Plato's philosophy. Perhaps the most significant feature of this conception is the emphasis on the non-sensuous levels of reality. This emphasis is supported in various ways by much in the development of post-Aristotelian philosophic thought to culminate in Plotinus' assertion of the independent and superior existence of non-sensuous levels of reality.

But if the name and the writings of Plato provided a major focus of Plotinus' thought, other philosophers had an essential share in its

formation. We know from Porphyry that it was Plotinus' custom to have his "seminars" start with the reading of some philosophical text.[12] The *Enneads* discuss fully texts not only from Plato, but also from Aristotle, the commentators on Plato and Aristotle, Stoic or Epicurean philosophers, and even the Gnostics.[13] There is one difference, however. While Plato's *dixit* is subject to interpretation only, Plotinus feels free to criticize the other philosophers. It is the discussion, rejection, and assimilation of these doctrines which enter as substantial elements into his own system. The vocabulary of Plotinus alone shows this, particularly in its full utilization of Aristotelian and Stoic terminology. Plotinus does not hesitate to describe even Plato's doctrines in terms of this later technical vocabulary.

Plotinus' table of categories develops on the basis of a critical discussion of those of Aristotle and the Stoics (and, of course, in full consideration of the generic terms discussed in Plato's *Sophist*).[14] The problems raised in Aristotle's psychology, and continued in later philosophers and the medical tradition, concerning the relation of bodily constitution to the emotions provide a central focus for his discussion of the nature of man.[15] Plotinus is particularly fond of Aristotle's principle that actuality precedes potentiality; this principle in Plotinus' system serves to support the conception of the ontological priority of the One or Good.[16]

A favorite topic of Aristotle and the Epicureans as to whether happiness depends on length of enjoyment is taken up in full by Plotinus.[17] To a discussion of destiny,[18] providence,[19] and the permissibility of suicide[20]—central Stoic topics—several books of the *Enneads* are devoted. The Stoic view of the nature of the beautiful is discussed and rejected.[21] Stoic materialism, being both in its metaphysical and in its ethical aspects a chief obstacle to his transcendentism, is given extended and frequent consideration.[22] He utilizes for his own purposes elements of the Stoic doctrine of the sympathy pervading the whole universe.[23]

Epicurean detachment and Stoic submission enter as elements into

his conception of man's attitude to the world of sense. With the Stoics he regards *this* life as similar to a play for which man has not written the script but in which he may or may not perform his assigned role well.[24] Epicurean consolations concerning the nothingness of death are his also.[25] He shares the characteristic asceticism of Hellenistic philosophies. His view of the nature of the supreme good is developed, among other things, in explicit differentiation from the Epicurean view of pleasure as the highest good.[26] Plotinus' discussions of the nature of numbers,[27] of astrology,[28] magic,[29] demonology[30] presuppose favorite Hellenistic doctrines as developed in Neopythagoreanism, Middle Stoicism, and Middle Platonism.

As has been indicated already, what was perhaps most important to Plotinus in the tradition upon which he built were those doctrines which tended towards the conception of transcendent levels of reality, in particular the conceptions of a transcendent One, fully developed only by Plotinus, and a transcendent *nous*. Motivations for this development can be traced to the very beginnings of Greek philosophy and its search for order or unification in the face of natural and social change. It was a generalization of utmost boldness when pre-Socratic philosophers first declared that all things (*panta*) were one (*hen*).[31] The undifferentiated Protean All, the theatre of ceaseless generation and destruction was asserted to be One, the most immense reduced to the most limited and simple.

This search for unification had not stopped at the attempt of a collective comprehension of all things, but led to exploring and unifying the things found *within* the universe. Such unifications needed agents in the face of a disjunctive world. At first these agents were this-worldly—such as, *eros*,[32] to which was opposed a principle of strife to take account of the processes of separation.[33] But it soon seemed to many philosophers that the world of sense in all its variety could not provide such a unifying agent. So there developed a strong trend towards conceiving of an *orderer* existing apart from the order of things, towards separating Unity itself from the world one had

sought to unify. The search for unification and order thus led easily to the postulation of transcendent realms of existence which exhibited more ideally the patterns looked for through the method of unification. As the criteria of what constituted unity and order grew in strictness, the number of realms of existence was correspondingly enlarged by the addition of still superior hypostases. Plotinus' One topped the unified order of the realm of *nous*. In later Neoplatonism there were still further additions and subdivisions.

These unified realms, inasmuch as they were conceived as models for the world of sense, could in no case possess a lesser plenitude than the world of sense. The *individualized* conception of the cosmos, the notion that All was *one*, made it possible to assign predicates to "all things" spoken of collectively as one assigns predicates to individual things. Hence it did not seem paradoxical to pile an intelligible *universe* on the sensible *universe*, to have, as in Plotinus, several levels of existence of which each is said to be *all things*[34]—as similarly in other philosophies, nature (all things) is contrasted with a total existence beyond nature. These various levels of reality were related in a causal or productive way. For the conception of transcendent orders had been motivated by the search for unifying agents not readily found in the ordinary world. Nevertheless, the amount of violence, strife, and evil in the world allegedly ordered by transcendent agency seemed to suggest a relative impotence in the transcendent orderer—a difficulty familiar to us from the theodicies. Plotinus was to solve this problem for himself by arguing that each level was as good as it could be if one did not seek for the perfection of the producer in the product.[35]

The preceding discussion has stressed the transcendent character which the search for unification and order assumed. Our next task is to stress its intellectualist implications. It is in *thought* particularly that the unifying comprehensiveness which is considered characteristic of superior reality is achieved. The superior reality which produces the world of sense is frequently conceived in noetic terms. There

is the human analogy of the order in the general's mind preceding the order of his army.[36] *Nous* in Plotinus, through the mediation of the psyche, produces the world of sense.[37] Plato's myth uses the image of a demiurge who creates contemplating the ideas.[38] In Philo it is the *nous* within God which is essential in creation.[39] The agent or orderer was not necessarily conceived in *personal* terms. In Plotinus, notably, it is order itself (*taxis*) which produces another order.[40]

A further consequence of this intellectualist trend was the assumption of the superiority of the general—which seems dominant in the realm of thought—over the particular—which seems dominant in the realm of existence. The general and the particular were not conceived as correlative terms. But the general was held to contain and ultimately to "produce" the particular. The logically general became the ontologically superior, a process by which the general was itself individualized. The assignment of its own level of existence to the general marks this particularization.[41]

Thirdly, it should be pointed out that perhaps the main support of the conception of transcendent existence is to be sought in the ethical perspective. Cosmos is the order of an existence that is changing. But change is the source, not only of intellectual wonder, but of far-reaching consequences both practical and moral. The insecurity implied in a changing world leads to a philosophical attitude which thinks of change (notably in the form of "sense" phenomena) as partially evil. Becoming is the realm of evil. The sphere of Being holds the good forever in existence, while in that of Becoming good is destined to only a passing career, whereby, moreover, in encroaching upon something else it brings about partial evil. In this world good feeds on evil, growth on decay. The world of sense thus exhibits both plan and planlessness; so that in analogy to human deliberation an agent is sought which accounts for the presence of "order" and which guarantees that the planless will contribute to an ulimate purpose. Ideal order which is envisaged as a possibility of

existence is transformed into an antecedent agent. (Even the Stoics in spite of their monism tended towards such a principle as is shown, for instance, in their notion of providence.) The world of sense is maintained and even kept from disintegration by a power *behind* it. When Plotinus comes to assert the identity of the One (or supreme existence) with the Good,[42] he gives his solution of the problem, characteristic of Greek philosophy since its beginning, concerning the relation of the good to existence.

Plotinus' denial of complete goodness to all levels of existence except the highest thus finds its antecedents both in the general problem of the relation of the good to existence and the specific trend towards transcendentism. This denial implies, particularly, a low evaluation of the role of human *praxis* and this theme again has a rich history in preceding thought. Already some pre-Socratics,[43] apparently rather critical of the value of existence itself, had declared that the good lay in the *contemplation* of existence—making an emphasis characteristic of the temper of much of Greek philosophy. The problem of the relation of the theoretical to the practical life remains a dominant one in ancient thought. It is complicated by the fact that often an apparent emphasis on the value of *praxis,* such as the Stoic notion of virtue, turns out to be ambiguous because good practice or virtue tend to be conceived as a sort of intellectual activity.[44] In Plotinus the conflict is "overcome" by conceiving the theoretical life as embodying more fully the values of the practical life. *Praxis* is only incomplete *theoria,* realizing in its material works the forms which *theoria* holds more fully and more permanently.[45] Nevertheless, in spite of Plotinus' rejection of *praxis,* it should be pointed out that there are aspects of his thought which tend towards a more positive evaluation of the non-intellectual levels of existence in granting them a necessary place in the hierarchy of the cosmos.

If philosophers had been content with being spectators, they would perhaps have been willing to accept change and to trace the patterns it exhibits. But being men in need of some kind of good or even

salvation, they also asked whether this multifarious change had some particular direction beneficial to man. Human aspiration suggested a striving towards some more ideal world. A similar dynamism was soon ascribed to things in general. The *goal* of such a powerful movement could have no lesser reality than the things it directed. Hence supreme goodness had to be conceived as existing. This "deduction" explains some of the severe dialectical strains to which the various systems of post-Aristotelian metaphysics were exposed. For it could lead, as in the case of the Stoics, to a cosmodicy which has to hold the brutalities of this world to be in accordance with a divine plan. With the Platonists, who recognized the insufficiency of the sense world, the rationality of this world became very tenuous,[46] and its *raison d'être,* given the perfection of superior reality, an ever-present problem.[47] It can be seen then that metaphyiscal inquiry is easily intertwined with ethical considerations—because ultimately the good must be oriented towards existence and the satisfactions which existence permits. Even the moral detachment of a Lucretius requires cosmic justification and Lucretius is busy to provide it.[48] In Neoplatonism philosophy came to seek the cosmos predominantly within the soul and through the introspection of the soul in a static existence beyond.[49]

The world which to Thales had been full of gods and pervaded by psyche[50] thus had reached stability in the hierarchical order of later philosophy, in which an unchanging good was the very source of the change which had so greatly aroused the pre-Socratics. The arrow which the Eleatics had arrested in its flight became the archetype of those many arrows which move. The consequent conflict between dynamic and static conceptions did find encouragement in the writings of Plato. It has been said of the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* that it effects a union of Plato's two fundamental principles of psyche and ideas, a fusion of "two originally distinct strains in Plato's thought."[51] The demiurge, the inferior gods, the world soul, the conception of the world as an animal (*zoon*), might indeed

be taken as devices towards bridging the gap between the formal nature of the ideas and the efficient nature of motion. How distinct these two strains were to Plato at any time is perhaps an open question. In the *Sophist,*[52] at least, Plato expresses himself with unmistakable clarity. He says that the true philosopher "cannot, on the one hand, accept the view of the Whole of True Being as static—the view alike of those who believe in one Form and those who believe in many. Nor, on the other hand, can he listen to those who teach universal motion. He must be like the children who ask for 'both, please' in dealing with everything in the universe moving and unmoved; he must teach that the Whole of True Being is 'both.' " [53]

Perhaps the most crucial mistake of the philosophers after Aristotle consists in their giving too facile an answer to Plato's demand for "both, please." In making the forms also efficient agents,[54] and in removing this agency to a level of existence different from that on which it acts, they opened the door to innumerable and unsolvable problems. Thus, in the pseudo-Platonic *Definitions*[55] Becoming is defined as a travel towards Being. In eliminating motion from being, motion became a puzzle. The way in which the later Platonists piled mediating power upon power (or demon upon demon) betrays an implicit awareness of the unproductiveness of mere form. Such a procedure was hardly able to meet the unheeded criticism of a Sextus Empiricus with regard to the traditional notion of causation in general. How, asks Sextus, can a "cause" produce that which it does not contain already, and, on the other hand, how can it be said to produce that which it contains? [56]

In the notion of cause (*aitia, poiesis*) the doctrines developed in consequence of the search for order and unifications find a major focus. The common sense notion of the fecundity and power of the cause to *produce* its effects never lost, in spite of several criticisms, its sway over ancient (and indeed modern) thought. It is mirrored in the Pythagorean conception of the "evolution" of the one into the

many, of the point into lines, planes, and solids.[57] It is mirrored in the doctrine of Ideas, the Stoic "seminal reasons" (*logoi spermatikoi*),[58] and reaches a culmination in Plotinus' One which is not a simple unity but the fullest and most fecund existence. This conception of causation may have been supported by myth which locates the causes of natural processes *behind* these processes. Sextus Empiricus at any rate when he sets out to criticize the dogmatic conception of cause prefaces it by a long section criticizing the dogmatic conception of gods.[59] Much earlier Aristotle had rejected the transcendent Forms of the doctrine of Ideas to account for the action of form upon matter in particular processes.[60]

A further rival to the notion of cause as a power which produces its effects from within were certain evolutionary conceptions, as for instance presented in atomism. But philosophers like Plotinus argued vigorously against the notion that an inferior reality could produce through various combinations a superior one.[61] Productiveness was the characteristic of "higher," not of "lower" reality.[62] Existence was conceived in terms of a descending scale of realities in which a stable, intelligible reality produces realties increasingly unstable and unproductive. The various aspects of this conception can perhaps best be summarized by stating what the notion of cause or productiveness (*poiein*) had come to mean to Plotinus. In the *Enneads* it has at least the following characteristics:

(1) A *productive* agency more powerful than its products;[63] (2) a *transcendent* existence which initiates and sustains existences dependent on it;[64] (3) a power which is not a passive possibility but one in which all possibilities are actualized;[65] (4) an existence in which fullness is consistent with *unity;*[66] (5) an *intelligible* existence[67] (the *One,* of course, is beyond *nous* though reached through *nous*); (6) an existence in which activity is compatible with rest because, though it is always active, the end of its activity is always achieved; its productiveness is a sort of "overflow," and not due to an act of planning;[68] (7) a pure agent which does not require a

patient or substratum to act upon and which does not itself become a patient for some other agent;[69] this agent in one respect acts incidentally on a substratum if the latter happens to present itself,[70] in another respect it produces its patient;[71] (8) a beginning without beginning.[72] In listing these characteristics of the power of the cause[73] one cannot but stop to wonder at the strange flowerings which the notion of the seminal power of cause made possible.

It is the One which in Plotinus is the very supreme cause. This notion again is foreshadowed by previous thought. Already the various conceptions of the One in Parmenides, Heraclitus, and the Pythagoreans contain elements of the conception of the One as later developed by Plotinus. In the Pythagoreans the One is the originative source of multiplicity (though not identical with the Good). In Parmenides the One bears the germ of transcendence: it is *behind,* not *in* the phenomena. In Heraclitus it underlies multiplicity. Heraclitus' emphasis upon the unity of opposites will be echoed by the Stoics and, in the context of the world of sense, by Plotinus.[74] A somewhat different emphasis upon unity in multiplicity underlies the Stoic assumption of internal relatedness (*syndesmos, sympatheia*)[75]—an emphasis which opened to the individual the possibility of participation in the goodness of the whole and which also favored mantic and magic,[76] features also to be mirrored by Plotinus in his treatment of the sense world.[77] The tension between the immanentist tendency initiated by Heraclitus' One and the transcendental tendency initiated by Parmenides' One Plotinus tries to remove by a favorite device, according to which the One is both everywhere (*pantachou*) and nowhere (*oudamou*).[78]

Both Plato and Aristotle are frequently taken to anticipate, if not to originate, the Plotinian conception of the One. The One of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides,*[79] the unmoved mover of book xii of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*[80] who moves by being loved, have always been cited approvingly by Neoplatonists. Nevertheless, the sequel of the *Parmenides* contains criticisms which throw a good

deal of doubt on the One of the first hypothesis, and one of the most characteristic assertions of Aristotle is that "one" and "being" have many meanings, but are not substances.[81] Still, to whatever results contemporary interpretations of Plato and Aristotle may come, the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* contains assertions which a later Platonic interpreter of Plato might read in his own way. The One of the first hypothesis is characterized by being not many, nowhere, changeless, neither existent nor even one; it is without name, unknowable, unperceivable.[82] It has already been indicated how much this resembles the most characteristic formulations of Plotinus. The namelessness of the One might even be taken as an "anticipation" of that secrecy and ineffability of supreme existence which plays so large a role in certain Platonists, but from which Plotinus is almost entirely free, except for frequent characterizations of the One in negative terms (stating what the One is *not*).[83]

The trend towards a Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato and Aristotle as well as towards a hierarchical conception of reality crowned by a transcendent One pervades all Hellenistic thought. It is already found in the kind of problems raised in the preserved fragment of Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*. The Stoic conception of an active principle tended to undermine the immanentism of their position.[84] To the Peripatetic author of *On the World* God is established in the highest place and it is his power (*dynamis*) only which pervades and orders the universe.[85] The Neopythagoreans[86] as well as Posidonius and Philo are significant figures in this development. In contrast to Plotinus, however, the One of Posidonius is a material spirit (*pneuma*),[87] and the One of Philo seems to be both anthropomorphic and a noetic nature.[88] To Plotinus the One must be beyond *nous* because contemplation must be related to a reality which is contemplated[89] and because *nous,* with its implicit divisions cannot be ultimate Unity.[90] (Even in Renaissance Platonism Plotinus is not followed in his last step, which is most particularly his own, of locating the One *beyond nous*.[91])

In Plotinus the concept of the One reaches the highest point of its career. By a curious development that concept, which on the surface is most simple and most devoid of content, comes to stand for the fullest and most powerful reality. The search for continuity and unified patterns led to the promotion of a methodological principle to a hypostatized existence. The search for security led to the subjugation of the ever-vanishing, discordant, discontinuous multiplicity of changing existence to the rule of one. As Aristotle had said, quoting Homer at the end of book xii of the *Metaphysics*—a passage indicative perhaps of the earlier mythico-historical and monarchical background of the conception of the One—"The rule of many is not good. Let one be the ruler." Plotinus finished what the pre-Socratics had begun: The universe was subject to the One.

The outcome of the preceding discussion is the affirmation of the continuity of Plotinus' thought with the Hellenic tradition. This tradition embodies, in particular, the antecedents of his key terms and key conceptions. If Plotinus shared with many of his contemporaries the desire for a better life beyond the world of sense, he attempts to work out its intellectual implications on the basis of Greek philosophy. As the sequel will try to show more fully, it is to miss the peculiar character of Plotinus' philosophy to read it in terms of later theologies or Oriental religious speculations.[92]

There is one important movement of the Hellenic tradition which is absent in the discussions of Plotinus—Skepticism. He never seems to have regarded it as a challenge, if his silence is a clue to his attitude. Perhaps the professed traditionalism of Plotinus, particularly his acceptance of the authority of Plato, as he understood him, may have encouraged him in his attitude of certainty. A further source of his certainty is the *experience* which he claims to have had of the existence of higher realities. It is to an analysis of this claim to which we now must turn—an analysis which also may further confirm our emphasis on the conceptualistic nature of Plotinus' philosophy.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF PLOTINUS' "MYSTICISM"

WERNER JAEGER has suggested to us "to interpret the growth of Greek philosophy as the process by which the original religious conception of the universe, the conception implicit in the myth, was increasingly rationalized. Picture this process as the gradual shading of a great circle, in smaller concentric circles from the circumference to the centre. Then it is rational thinking which invades the circle of the universe, taking possession of it more and more deeply, until in Plato and Socrates it reaches the centre, which is the human soul. From that point, the movement spreads back again until the end of ancient philosophy in Neoplatonism." [1] This characterization of the career of rationality in Greek thought is general and, I assume, not meant to apply uniformly to all phases of Greek thought. It nevertheless seems to call attention to the fact that, whenever we speak of the Greeks in any honorific sense, we do not refer primarily to their cultural history from Homer to the closing of the Academy of Athens, but rather to that remarkable epoch which has come to be associated with the name of Pericles. That brief and brilliant span embodied in a way never paralleled that supremacy of reason which in its dominant achievements exhibited a vitality far removed from the shallow sophistry and empty dialectic to which reason is so easily liable. Once at least that ruling ideal of Greek culture, the fusion of matter and form, to use Aristotle's language, entered this world of Becoming and found embodiment in art, in literature, and, though less strongly, even in daily life. In the famous words of Thucydides: "In our enterprises we present the singular spectacle of daring and deliberation, each carried to its highest point, and both united in the same persons; although usually decision is the fruit of

ignorance, hesitation of reflexion."[2] For a brief time, and primarily in the "violet-crowned city of Athena," *logos* proved that mastery over existence which has given to the name of the "Greeks" throughout the centuries the implication of an immortal realization of the ideal.

Nevertheless, this rationality was an achievement, not the rule. How frail and fugitive an achievement it was, the whole history of subsequent centuries proves. It had itself arisen on the sombre foundation of superstition. There is testimony to this superstition even in classical authors. Studies of the history of Greek religion in particular have discovered the violent background of fifth-century civilization.[3] The Olympians had not decisively bound their chthonian ancestors. Zeus must not blind us to the presence of Dionysos, particularly in his non-Olympian version. The existence of these forces adds a further dimension to the victorious flight of Greek genius in the fifth century. As in Plato's *Phaedrus,* reason, the charioteer, seems to have been successful for a while in making the dark horse of superstition, ignorance, and blind passion obey its commands. But soon, owing to a complexity of circumstances, its grip began to weaken and once more the subterranean forces which reason had made subservient arose to a more independent rule. In certain later Neoplatonists, philosophy became allied with magic. Or reason—no longer the pilot of an existence that was considered unmanageable—ended in multiplying realms of ideal existence.

But between the rationality of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. and the theurgies of the last centuries of antiquity there lies a period of rationalism in philosophy. One system after another in ethics, logic, and natural philosophy was conceived and violently debated. The Stoics asked men to live in accordance with nature, the Epicureans in one line of argument emphasized nature's indifference to man, though both shared in the common ideal of tranquillity. Good practice was held to be the aim of thought. Yet it was acceptance of whatever station one found oneself in which in the first place

constituted such good practice. The emperor and the slave shared a common philosophy. But what united them was not a common theory of conduct but a common neglect of such considerations. Life was not something to be made but something to be borne.[4] It was this disregard of practice,[5] in spite of the emphasis upon virtue, which favored an intellectualism that finds expression, for instance, in the Stoics' reducing the emotions to mental conceptions.[6] There is no intention of denying the practical relevance of philosophy in the Hellenistic world. All that is intended here is to call attention to the rationalistic tenor of that philosophy. (This rationalism is not surprising, given the impulse towards *logos* initiated by the earlier philosophers and the relative divorce of reason from practice and scientific observation.) The later Skeptics came to attack this intellectualistic trend in philosophy as dogmatism. Yet they themselves share the assumptions of the rationalism they attack. They too use the rationalistic method of their opponents, and hence, after having done their work of criticism, they cannot suggest a workable alternative except for a vague common sense and the promise of the vague freedom of the suspension of judgment (*epoche*). It is not surprising that this rationalism was shattered in the end, even in philosophy. Magic is only the dark counterpart of the re-eruption of those tumultuous powers which Plato once had bound in myth and from which Hellenistic philosophers had tried, as it proved, in vain, to find freedom in inward tranquillity (*ataraxia*).

The place of Plotinus in this movement of philosophy is still a debated one. While his rejection of magic, at least in the noetic realm, is singularly clear,[7] his philosophy has yet been taken to be oriented towards a *special* experience, often called mystic. Plotinus himself lays claim to experiences transcending those of ordinary sense life. The interpreter therefore is faced with the task, not only of ascertaining the significance of this alleged experience for the system of Plotinus, but also of evaluating the claim itself to such an experience. The latter task raises the crucial question whether

Plotinus' work presupposes a kind of evidence which, being constituted by a special experience, is not readily accessible to less favored observers.

There have always been two opposed, though not necessarily conflicting approaches to the philosophy of Plotinus. There are, on the one hand, those who see in Plotinus the "mystic" whose soul has soared into transmundane regions of which the inspired pages of the *Enneads* provide a glimpse. Many witnesses, both ancient and modern, could be cited. It may serve the purpose of emphasis to cite a contemporary who in the present context speaks not as a Plotinus scholar, but simply as an admirer: "One summer day in the country, I was reading the *Enneads*. I was sitting on my bed with the book on my knees; reading one of those numerous passages where Plotinus speaks of the soul and of God, as much in the character of a mystic as in that of a metaphysician . . . a wave of enthusiasm flooded my heart. The next moment I was on my knees before the book covering the page I had just read with passionate kisses, and my heart burning with love." [8] This exuberance is perhaps extreme. Nevertheless, the writings of Plotinus have occasioned reactions of this kind, even if they are usually expressed less enthusiastically. Undoubtedly the fear that such enthusiasm constitutes the core of Plotinus' work has deterred many a philosophic reader from further inquiry.

But curiously enough the *Enneads* have also lent themselves to rather cold logical exercises. This is, for instance, illustrated by the *Theological Elements* of Proclus. There the architecture of a descending scale of realities is supported and elaborated by dry and minute reasoning. It provides fertile opportunity for indulging the delight in subtlety by the creation of further links between the various "levels" of existence—a task as capable of refinement as it is insoluble. Thus, in post-Plotinic Neoplatonism, the unemotional dialectic of the *Elements of Theology* is found by the side of the kind of enthusiasm which is, for instance, illustrated in the theurgic

Iamblichus. (The *Elements* themselves are characteristic only of one aspect of their author who among other things also wrote hymns.)

In Plotinus argument attains only rarely to the deductive formalism of a Proclus. Still, in their rationalistic method, the *Enneads* bear a resemblance to the *Elements*. Plotinus states frequently that he is addressing listeners (or readers) in whom he does not presuppose experience of that union with supreme reality which he claims to have had himself.[9] He says repeatedly that those who have had such an experience would readily know what he is talking about.[10] But he knows he cannot rest his case on that. Hence much of the *Enneads* is concerned with *proving* the existence of transcending levels of reality. It is thus in terms of the tensions and directions, the incompleteness, want, and conations of sense existence that the other forms of existence are inferred.

Nevertheless, the supersensible levels of existence cannot only be inferred, they can, Plotinus believes, also be experienced. The *Enneads* in this sense are a guide book to such experience, and Plotinus occasionally avowedly resorts to the method of "persuasion" (*peitho*)[11] in order to convey the flavor of such experience, as much as words can convey it to those who have not yet had the experience. The experience of ultimate reality is one of enjoyment, fruition after a long discipline.[12] The One is also the Good.[13] Plotinus becomes eloquent in describing it. Such eloquence does not single out Plotinus from other thinkers. Philosophic investigation of existence finds its ultimate human relevance in the disclosure of good. That accounts for "persuasive" passages in Aristotle as well as in Dewey, in Plotinus as well as in Bertrand Russell. Even Kant waxed enthusiastic when he spoke of duty. (Poetry, of course, may be read for the sensuous enjoyment alone. As in the account of the enthusiastic reader we quoted, a "god" may be perceived in the *Enneads* which is not there. Enthusiasm, divorced from the rigor of argument which it crowns, may have peculiar results, and in the case of Plotinus' admirers such peculiarity has been frequent.)

But in doing justice to the "mystical" approach to Plotinus we must now more fully turn to his distinction of levels of experience (corresponding to the levels of existence). The evidence which Plotinus adduces for this distinction of levels of experience seems to consist more in *pointing to* them rather than in saying precisely what they are.[14] To Plotinus this hesitation about describing these experiences in words is not comparable to the difficulty of describing ordinary experiences to those who have not themselves undergone them. The experiences of noetic existence or of the One cannot be described adequately because language is fitted primarily only for the level of sense existence.[15] The realm of *nous,* however, is not of that kind of intelligibility that can be expressed by language. Plotinus is not alone with this difficulty of conveying the nature of these higher experiences by language. Sketchiness characterizes most other discussions in the history of thought of a transsensible realm. Whenever they try to convey an intimation of the nature of such experience, they do best when they resort to the language of metaphor, that is, to speaking in terms of sense images.[16] This may not be very surprising if it is held that it is tensions in *this-worldly* experiences, present dissatisfactions, that give rise to a compensatory conception of experiences beyond. But to Plotinus the sensuous images are due to the deficiency of language, not to the character of the experience they refer to. (An examination of the validity of this claim is implied in the discussion that follows. But even now it can be pointed out that if Plotinus' conception of higher levels of experience is correct, it would also imply the impossibility of having these higher experiences clarified and criticized by language as is the case with sense experience. Hence little could be said about them beyond the assertion that they seem desirable in retrospect or in prospect. Plotinus thus would be vulnerable to the charge that from the standpoint of discursive reason [*logismos*], which is that of philosophy, he may be rather blindly handing himself over to experi-

ences which are alleged to carry their own justifications and satisfactions.)

In the preceding chapter the attempt has been made to show how the notion of a realm of existence *behind* sense phenomena arose on conceptualist grounds (though it was no doubt aided by mythical notions of "heaven" and "blessed islands"). No special experience is usually assumed for Parmenides' motionless One. The question then is whether and to what extent experiential factors supported and enlarged key conceptions in Plotinus' system—conceptions that were prepared in a long intellectual tradition.[17] Plotinus himself occasionally realizes the tension between his conceptual apparatus and the emotive richness of what he considers "higher" experiences. He then declares that one can hardly say of the One that it is one, or of the Good that it is good.[18] But such pretended ineffability, if pushed any further, would be destructive of many of the positive assertions that Plotinus makes in the *Enneads,* and hence this line of argument is not pushed very far.

In seeking the experiential factors that entered into Plotinus' philosophy one is first struck by the central position of *nous* in his system (which in one respect, of course, is a continuation of the intellectualist and introspective trend of Hellenistic philosophy). To Plotinus *nous* is not simply a name for the intelligibility of things of sense, but an existentially separate realm independent of any basis in sense experience. (How unobvious such a basis is the presence of the various forms of idealism proves.) This realm of *nous* is free from almost all of the limitations of sense objects. It does not share in the mutual exclusiveness and destructiveness of things of sense. Intelligible fire does not burn.[19] *Nous* unites the past, present, and future in contrast to the fugitive moments of sense. It contains in a more unified way all the variety of sense experience.[20] The reader will readily recognize in this account of *nous* a description—whether adequate or not—of the process of thinking. It is indeed in think-

ing that existence often reaches the kind of integration which Plotinus describes. But does this justify the ascription of a substantive nature to *nous?* Indeed Plotinus himself is implicitly aware of the difficulty of hypostatizing intelligence. He spends a good deal of dialectical effort to assert the identity of intelligible objects (*noeta*) with real objects (*onta*), the realm of *nous* with the realm of Being.[21] In other contexts the functional nature of *nous* is even more clear when it is recognized that ultimately *nous* must be related to an existence which it contemplates. (That existence to Plotinus is the One.)

Does Plotinus really have sufficient evidence to claim that his experience was *special* in the sense that it was *in kind* different from the experience to which other men and other philosophers usually have access? To answer this it needs to be pointed out that ordinary experience also has its "levels," its fruitions and culminations, its vital moments of the sort which Plotinus enjoyed. The stages of Plotinus' ascent can readily be traced in common experience. Thus the prior stages of the experience of *nous* can be discerned, for instance, in the experience of the scientist who has a creative association when several things are "seen together." [22] The scientist and the philosopher know well those synoptic moments when bits of being suddenly become related, connections are established, unifications achieved. They even know moments when this comprehensive clarity seems to reach a most marvelous extent (only to often prove disappointing upon inspection, of one's thought or written record of it, the next day).

To Plotinus, of course, it seemed as if he had achieved more than an ordinary integrating vision. With his intense desire for all-comprehensiveness, it seemed to him that at times he embraced all being and that then, contemplating all being, the distinction between the contemplating being and that which is contemplated grew tenuous.[23] The object having become transparent in knowing, its muteness having become eloquence, penetration seemed to have

reached the point when the being of the object became indistinguishable from his own. It was as if the philosopher unlocking the very bosom of existence became one with what he had just seen, no longer separated from the object of his vision, not even like a star soul arrested by the barrier of mere contemplation in an eternal circle around its source.[24] Such ultimate experience, as Plotinus indicates,[25] was in a way a return to the immediacy which characterizes sense perception, but without its muteness. On the other hand, it seemed to preserve the clarity of knowledge without its separation from its objects.[26] The clarity of knowledge and the immediacy of sense seemed combined in a luminous experience, which Plotinus compares not in vain to the radiance of light.[27] Reason carried to the utmost bounds, its vision eventuated in sheer delight.[28]

Are these further claims of Plotinus lyrical exaggeration? Was the return to an immediacy like that of sense less metaphorical than he believed? In general, was Plotinus right in interpreting his experience to support his claim of the existence of super-sensible realities? To a modern interpreter it may seem that the realities of *nous* and of the One that Plotinus speaks of do not constitute so much separate *existential* realms as they are the expression of ideals. The realm of *nous* might then be taken to express Plotinus' conception of what knowing would be like if it were brought to perfection, and the One would be an expression of his ideal of harmony, peace, and the elimination of all want. At this point it will be objected that Plotinus himself does not present the realms of *nous* and of the One as the expression of ideals, but as existences that he *experienced*. Must we then stop at this claim to experience and say that the absence of such experiences in the critic does not prevent their absence in the author? Fortunately this is not the final way of putting the problem. For to stop here would be to overlook that Plotinus' experiences are not identical with his *interpretations* of them. His claim to the experience of transsensible realities is subjectively sincere. But what we wish to assert—within the limits imposed by the irrecover-

ability of Plotinus' individual experiences, limits that are, however, imposed upon *all* interpreters—is that Plotinus' *interpretation* of his experiences was not correct. We have attempted to supply evidence for this assertion in two main ways: (1) by showing that the assumption of transsensible realities can be seen to arise on purely conceptual grounds and (2) by showing that the descriptions which Plotinus gives of alleged *special* experiences can easily be seen to refer to experiences that are *in kind* not different from sense experiences and which hence do not seem to warrant the assumption of *levels* of experience. Whatever in Plotinus' statements suggests a *special* experience, such as the synoptic vision of *nous,* seems to be due to conceptual elaboration and idealization rather than the experience itself. These arguments may not be fully convincing to all readers. It should also be pointed out, therefore, that our best knowledge gives us no evidence that special experiences of the kind that Plotinus claims are actually *had* (not claimed to be had). On the contrary, all the evidence points in the opposite direction. The burden of proof, therefore, is upon Plotinus and his supporters in this matter. They cannot make good their claim simply by "describing" certain experiences, but they must show that their descriptions are adequate. Plotinus attempts nothing of the sort and hence does nothing to alleviate the critical reader's suspicion of a gap between the description and the experience, particularly after the conceptual origins of the key descriptive terms have been traced. It is our claim that without the conceptual framework, both as inherited and as developed by Plotinus, his "description" would have been considerably different. The net outcome of the present analysis does not seem then to support Plotinus' claim to a special experience. What it seems to establish is not a special *experience,* but a special *interpretation* of experience.[29]

The preceding account has stressed the predominant position of *nous* in Plotinus' system. This was not meant to understress the moral significance of Plotinus' conception of ascent.[30] Union with

the One is the culmination of a long series of purifications (*katharseis*) and the ultimate answer to a passionate moral longing for salvation (to use a Christian term). But there is justification for the stress on the intellectual elements in Plotinus' experience. He himself makes the experience of *nous* immediately precede that of the One. Our discussion of Plotinus' experiential claims should not obscure the fact that the space given to them is small in comparison with his dialectical elaborations. Even in his account of the One the discursive element rules and he does not resort to the pictorial imagery familiar from the mystics.[31] This rationalistic method is seen in its full significance when it is realized that Plotinus attempts to arrive at a comprehensive world view without the benefit of either revelation or myth. Ultimately, of course, Plotinus' conception of the world, the way in which he unifies existence, may be considered mythical in character. But this is not his deliberate intention. Where Plato resorts to a story, Plotinus tirelessly heaps argument upon argument. Yet, the rationality which characterizes his universe is not that of human reason. To Plotinus such an assumption would imply an imperfection in the productive source of existence.[32] His rationalism ends by denying human reason in favor of some superhuman reason (*nous*). Rationalism thus becomes superrationalism, which is in fact the partial abdication of reason. In spite of its avowed hostility to myth, it permits myth to re-enter with a vengeance; for myth disguised as reason will now interfere with what is properly the sphere of reason.

Thus the study of both the philosophic method and the experiential claims of Plotinus seems to lead to a peculiar conclusion. For it seems that the rationalism of Plotinus ultimately ends in an irrational world view and that his appeal to experience leads to a narrowing of experience in the direction of the intellectual sphere.

We have attempted to understand the philosophy of Plotinus as one possible outcome of Greek thought.[33] But if Plotinus can best be understood by knowing his predecessors, his philosophy has become

significant for the history of philosophy only in the form of the interpretation given by his successors. The figure of Plotinus therefore assumes a peculiar ambiguity, an ambiguity which is mirrored in the whole history of Western thought in its ever-renewed attempts to reconcile its rationalistic orientation inherited from the "Greeks" with the deepening of its moral experience which it owes to the Jewish-Christian tradition. It is relevant, therefore, to devote some final remarks to Plotinus' relation to Christianity. A study of late Neoplatonic philosophy does show that it lacks some of the dynamic elements which enabled Christianity to exert its great social influence (in particular, its emphasis upon good works and human equality). But these merits need no special enhancement either by claiming Plotinus as a direct predecessor or by denying the Neoplatonic elements in Christianity—strangely, attempts in both directions have been made.

The difference between Plotinus and Christianity does not consist alone and primarily in the difference between certain specific doctrines, such as that of an eternal production (*poiesis*) versus that of creation.[34] The difference, at its most pregnant, consists in the fact that there is no God in the philosophy of Plotinus.[35] From this follows the absence of a conception of grace[36] and all the other beliefs stemming from the Christian *personal* conception of ultimate reality. There is none of that drama which Plotinus came to censure so severely in the Gnostics, none of the poetic intensity of the fight between a good and an evil spirit, no last day of judgment, no God become man. The One or the Good of Plotinus must not be called God, as Arnou, for instance, has done.[37] The concepts of Plotinus function within a philosophy which does not rest on any extra-philosophical revelation, and the direction of human aspiration (*ephesis*) or *eros* which they imply is different from the direction towards a revealed God.[38]

On the other hand, as Christianity took over so much of the intel-

lectual framework of Neoplatonism, there are similarities as well. Such dependence is often unduly minimized. Of this, Gilson's treatment of the concept of Being is an instructive instance. Gilson maintains that the affirmation of "the metaphysical primacy of Being" is derived not from philosophy but from revelation, in particular, that passage in the *Pentateuch* where God declares his name to be, "I am the one who am."[39] Now it is interesting to find Plotinus saying of his One that it first of all *is*,[40] and to have him furthermore assign to it all the characteristics of perfection,[41] infinity,[42] and transcendence[43] which Gilson claims for his ultimate Being. (The One of Plotinus, if it could speak, would rather be inclined to declare, "*It* is the one which is." But then the first person of the *Pentateuch* passage is characteristic of the revealed God but irrelevant to the question of Being.) Gilson, in a side remark, does not spurn the argument that Plotinus "was not altogether ignorant of Christianity."[44] The significance of the Christian contribution lies very much in the moral sphere.[45] There is no diminution of this significance when it is recognized that philosophically Christianity rests heavily on pagan foundations. It testifies to the wisdom of the Fathers that they withstood the temptation to build Christianity exclusively on its religious inspiration. It is thus that the achievements of the West became possible. The attempts to deny these foundations do not serve in the end even the cause of Christianity.[46]

In the fourth century, in the face of the rising and almost victorious movement of Christianity, Sallustius in his book *On the Gods and the Universe* defended the use of the old god myths. Nevertheless, to Sallustius myth was only a pictorial garb for whatever metaphysical and other views he happened to find acceptable. Myth said nothing which could not be more adequately expressed in words, though its initial mystery might stimulate inquiry.[47] In the midst of growing superstition, growing even in Neoplatonism,

such a rationalistic conception of myth was still possible. Yet in its narrow intellectualism it was itself an indication of the wane of rational power.

The world culture of Hellenism with its many currents and crosscurrents, coupled with the steady influx of barbarians, created indeed problems vastly more complex than those of Greece's age of reason. They were so overwhelming that the work of centuries was required to bring about some sort of intellectual and social order —a process not even completed today, for the bequest of Hellenism to us still contains its unresolved conflicts.

The myths into which Sallustius tried in vain to read power were soon discarded. They were replaced by a majestic and overwhelming revelation which for long would determine men's conception of existence. But for all its majesty and power, this revelation would deeply disturb that vital balance between *logos* and *mythos* which had characterized ancient philosophy at its best. The character of myth itself became obscured. It took on much of the semblance of *logos*. In particular, truth was predicated of myth, while *logos* was often assigned the sterile task of reconciling contradictions and "proving" what by its nature was not subject to proof. Plotinus foreshadows this development. But his persistent rationalism exempts him from any deliberate connection with it. The use as well as misuse of *logos* in Plotinus may therefore be instructive to our own age in which the waning of old myths has led men to a reexamination of the function of rationality in the acquisition of the good.

CHAPTER III

LEVELS OF REALITY

THE anonymous author of the treatise *On the Sublime,* possibly writing as far back as the first century A.D., finds himself at the end of his work confronted with the question whether the loss of political liberty is not responsible for the lack of greatness in the literature of his day. He answers the question in the negative, claiming that it is rather the prevalent greediness and love of pleasure which are responsible for the decline. Then he adds the ominous words that perhaps the controls which people nowadays find imposed upon themselves are all to the good. For without this restraint, the evil passions of men might lead to general destruction.[1] There is an obscure realization in this remark that the increasing dominance of the emperors is no mere accidental whim of a few ambitious men which might be stopped by a new Brutus tomorrow. The growing unification of power in the hands of the emperor was indeed only the instrumentality by which the integration of the peoples and countries of almost all of the then known world was to be achieved. The bonds of war, trade, and ambition had become too well established to maintain the former isolation. The great movement towards world-wide unification had in fact begun a long time before the first Caesars. In the recorded history of Europe it is the invasions of the Persian kings which mark the first stage in this development. It was soon followed by the conquests of Alexander of Macedon, which were to foreshadow centuries of ancient empire history. Later the appearance of the Germanic peoples only widened the scope of the problem.

It was Rome which became for centuries the focus of this development. But the creation of the empire was no mere local matter. In

politics, as well as in art, religion, and literature, the building of the empire was a co-operative affair. One has only to remember how soon even emperors came from non-Roman families to realize how much the Roman empire was one of Greeks, Semites, Egyptians, Illyrians, and many other peoples as well. From the point of view of world history it was not so important which nation should rule, but how the integration of an interdependent world should be achieved. Indeed, by the end of the third century Rome had ceased to be the capital of the empire.

This trend towards unification found its center in the institution of the emperor. Unity was to come through the undivided authority of the supreme political lord. No wonder then that the need for unity coupled with the existence of profound divergences gave rise to a multiplicity of aspirants to the throne. In the third century—the century of Plotinus—emperors often succeeded each other more rapidly than the years. The rivalry of persons was a negligible factor in the rivalry of armies and the constant shifting of the equilibrium conditioned by the movement of people at the borders of the empire, from Persia to the Rhine. There was further the long controversy between emperor and senate which reached a climax under Gallienus in the prohibition of senators' holding military office—a fact which is responsible for the distorted view of Gallienus' personality which was current till recently owing to the accounts which the historians of the senatorial party handed down to us.[2] Religion was a further potent factor in the development here indicated, both as a rival to imperial power and as an envisioned instrument of further establishing the unity of the empire by the bond of a common religion. Moreover, the development of the institution of the imperial *dominus* is paralleled by the rise of the idea of one God, with both conceptions mutually supporting each other.[3]

The violence of the political life is matched by an equal fervor exhibited by the devotees of the numerous cults and religions. While the imperial pomp is paralleled in mysterious processions, the

intensity of religious faith does not stop short of martyrdom and even self-mutilation, and this violence towards oneself mirrors the violence outside. Nevertheless, the well-known prevalence of religion during this period should not blind one to the fact that the flesh also was receiving its full tribute. The condemnation of luxury looms large in the writings of the time, from the Stoic *diatribe* and the Cynic sermon to the historians of the imperial court. But we know from the mocking reception of one such sermon delivered by the saintly emperor Julian in the fourth century how large masses of the populace must have felt about the exhortation to simplicity and asceticism.[4] The busy workshops of Asia and an active commerce were, indeed, well able to supply the demand for luxury. One has only to glance at the fifteen books of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists* (*Sophists at Dinner*) to realize that, in spite of the moralizing of its author, it must have been read by many not primarily from the motive of contemplating the vanity of physical pleasure. Occasionally, it seems, even religion lent itself as a special excuse for sensual indulgence. Some considered the external sacramental ritual as sufficient to wash away all sin. To others predestination assured the salvation of the "elect" regardless of any transgression. A sharply dualistic conception of man permitted sensual excess as irrelevant to the spirit, and some Gnostics declared boldly that one must give to the spirit what is of the spirit and to the flesh what is of the flesh.[5]

In speaking of these times—which are rather weakly characterized by the phrase "failure of nerve"—one must not omit to mention the great pestilences which ravaged Italy in the third century and which exacted a frightful toll in human lives. But as if to accentuate this miserable story of interminable wars, insurrections, and plagues the imperial propaganda proclaims unperturbedly an age of peace. *Ubique pax,* everywhere is peace, we read on the coins of Gallienus,[6] whose father was captured by the Persians, whose son was killed by rival aspirants to the throne, and who himself was eventually murdered. The happiness, the security of the times,[7] is announced

by other coins of the same emperor. These Augustan proclamations cannot have been taken as statements of facts by anyone. But in expressing the deepest hopes of the times they may have been taken to contain the promise of their fulfillment through allegiance to the emperor.

One might expect that a philosopher writing in the third century would find rich material for reflection and analysis in the history of his times, which were fascinating, though violent and full of evil. If Aristotle remained oblivious to the far-reaching significance of the conquests of his own disciple Alexander, another philosopher might attempt, from the added perspective of several centuries and spurred by the great insecurity of his own times, to discern the place of man in the great interplay of the forces of society. But in turning to Plotinus, the greatest philosopher of his age, one finds nothing of the sort. He is almost completely silent on political matters and his references to society are primarily negative and deprecatory. None of Plotinus' great moral exhortations are devoted to civic affairs.

The only explanation of such an attitude in a philosopher who passionately aspires to comprehensiveness is to be found in the fact that he believes the proper subject matter of philosophic study and the proper realm of moral endeavor to lie elsewhere than in the life of society. This indeed is the secret of a philosophy which regards violence, murder, even the destruction of one's home city to be like the shift of scenes in a play.[8] What then is the reality, what are the values which have been found beyond the world of society? Even Plato, for all his concern with social organization, was understood by many to assert the existence of a reality from the contemplation of which even the good statesman turns only reluctantly. In Plotinus that world is explored with all the tools of philosophical analysis developed in the centuries since Plato—to the point of holding it more amenable to philosophic understanding than ordinary reality. From book to book Plotinus does not tire of showing his readers how even the perspective of the world of sense necessitates the as-

sumption of a noetic reality. It is clear that only the most powerful motivation could have induced Plotinus to turn away from a social reality which was so insistent in making itself felt. To lay bare these motivations and to understand them will be the task of the ensuing discussion.

To answer the question what sort of universe it is in which man lives, it was first necessary to deal with the question whether chance or reason is the ruling power in that universe. This question had been a dominant theme in ancient philosophy.[9] A universe ruled by chance seemed to many thinkers to give no support to the moral aspirations of man. Combating the view that moral rules were mere conventions, they sought to found morality on the very nature of things.[10] Thus one of the speakers in the tenth book of Plato's *Laws* upholds the providential care of the divine for the things of this world and considers its denial as extremely dangerous for the welfare of the state. It is the Stoics who fully elaborated this view in their conception of providence (*pronoia*), ascribing to the universe a deliberative intelligence. This conception was a triumph of rationalism—a belief that the whole world was as "rational" and perspicuous as it would be if it had sprung from human deliberation alone.

Against this view the Epicureans, the traditional defenders of chance, took their stand. They brought forward a multitude of arguments to show that there was no evidence for a providential order of the world and that the arguments for providence could equally well be used to show the lack of it.[11] Nevertheless, the Epicureans believed that, because of the very negation of the hopes and illusions of a larger destiny, men could find happiness in the satisfaction of their more moderate wants.[12] There is, moreover, in the Epicurean writings an undercurrent of a celebration of nature which seeks the human good in man's conformity with the seasons and festivals of nature. In an important respect, therefore, there is only a thin dividing line between Stoics and Epicureans. Detach-

ment, contemplation, and conformity with nature are central themes in both philosophies. But the Stoics in denying the contingency of the world paved the way for a conception of human destiny in which it achieved cosmic significance. The Stoic *pronoia* and the Christian God show a good deal of resemblance, since both derive the origin of the world's order from an intelligence conceived in more or less personal terms.

It is at this point that Plotinus diverges fundamentally from Stoics, Epicureans, and Christians, rejecting the *pronoia* of the Stoics, the *tyche* (chance) of the Epicureans, and the personal God of the Christians. According to Plotinus existence is prior to thought, and the order which is to be discerned by thought in existence is not a product of thought.[13] To assume a personal intelligence governing things is to read the universe in anthropomorphic terms, but inspection shows that consciousness and deliberation characterize man only, while all other beings exist and act without it.[14] To assume a supreme being endowed with a providential, deliberating intelligence is incompatible with the perfection which such a being must possess.[15] It assimilates the supreme being to the practices of the human workman who on account of the incompleteness of his knowledge and the recalcitrance of his material must engage in planning and reasoning.[16] The creations of a supreme being would have to flow directly from its essence without the interference of deliberation.[17] The rationalism of cosmodicies, moreover, usually carries itself *ad absurdum*.[18] Of existence, ultimately, it cannot be said *why* it is, but *that* it is and *what* it is.[19] It is for the latter reason that Plotinus also rejects chance as a supreme governing agency. While allowing for contingency among variable things, he rejects it as an ultimate creative agency. It is within a given structure of reality, actual or potential, that chance can properly function.[20]

It might be thought surprising to find even traces of such a world view in the middle of the third century when the fervent

desire for salvation had led so many to the acceptance of views which pictured the universe as governed by personal beings whose benevolence could be assured by prayer and ritual and perhaps even forced by magic. Nevertheless, apart from the sincere intellectual effort which Plotinus is making to discern existence undistorted by human desire,[21] it should be pointed out that even this aspect of his philosophy (that it is only an aspect will be shown later) lends itself to moral use. It attempts to assuage the sufferings and frustrations of human existence by pointing out the relative insignificance of man's position in the universe. It is no accident that Epicurean consolations appear in the writings of Plotinus and other Neoplatonists.[22] The moral applicability of such a position is particularly evident if it is also assumed that greater goods are to be found outside the human sphere. In denying the special position of man as a first object of providential care, it is not denied that complete goodness cannot be found elsewhere. "Though He slay me, yet will I praise Him," says the religious man.

Were it not for the complications in Plotinus' philosophy, of which his conception of *psyche* is particularly symptomatic, one can easily see what the moral implications of his metaphysics would have been. He would have held out to man the contemplation of what is best and what is eternal in the universe as the highest achievement open to him. Like Aristotle, he would have declared that only for a brief span can man participate in the immortal, that only for a moment can finite man have a glimpse of life in its never-ending march and of its immovable exemplars. Elements of such a view, approaches in this direction, can indeed be found everywhere in Plotinus' writings.[23] But the fact is that Plotinus is not consistent, even though the inconsistency is implicit rather than explicit. To Plotinus the gap between man and the ultimate good is not a definitive one. It can be bridged through the ascent of the psyche to the highest reality.

Plotinus is caught between a cosmos-centered and a man-centered

perspective. In the former the achievement of ultimate goodness is denied to man precisely because his cosmic role implies limitation of function. In the latter man can become identified with the highest good.[24] The nature of such an identification, its very meaning, seems to be difficult, if not impossible, to understand. To Plotinus supreme reality is the transcendent unification of all being. But in what sense can this reality which might seem the extinction of all particularity[25] be the highest goal of aspiration of a particular being? The Stoics had identified the totality of existence with goodness. The individual could thus contribute to the ultimate good by taking his proper place in the whole. Plotinus shares this monistic conception of goodness which does not seek goodness, as in Aristotle,[26] in the specific perfections of each particular being.[27] But he is not content, like the Stoics, to have man contribute to the universal good by his subjection to the whole in his proper place. Instead he holds out to the human soul the possibility of becoming supreme totality itself. Man thus becomes both part and whole.[28] The shift from emphasizing the one to emphasizing the other accounts for the inconsistencies in Plotinus' work, while the assumption that the part is potentially the whole constitutes the dialectical unification of the shifting emphases. The preceding two sentences summarize Plotinus' philosophy in its *formal* aspects if one remains aware of the further complication that each of the levels of reality which Plotinus assumes contains in its own way *all* things.

Plotinus agrees with his Stoic predecessors that particularity is identical with deficiency. He differs from them in the assumption that human beings who are aware of their particularity strive to overcome it, not by co-ordination with the whole, but rather by identification with it. He further differs from them in disagreeing with their kind of identification of existence and goodness. To Plotinus partial evil, whatever its contributions to the organization of the whole, is still evil and a universe in which it exists still is not in all respects good.[29] He does not deny the fact of evil as the Stoics

had tried to do by a cosmodicy which was to bridge the gap between nature and goodness. (It should be noted, however, that the Stoic cosmodicy saved their precept to live in accordance with nature from being a glorification of mere power.) To Plotinus, if there is to be a realm which is totally good, it must exist beyond this world. It is considerations of this kind which led him and others to the assumption of levels of reality.

There are moral and metaphysical roots in the assumption of levels of reality. Morally speaking, the good is conceived to belong to a level of reality superior to that of the desiring being;[30] otherwise the good would already have been achieved in the present existence of the desiring being. Metaphysically, the permanent is assigned to a level above the changing reality, the existence of which it is thought to make possible. Plotinus shares with other ancient thinkers the assumption of a stable reality as the condition of the world of change. He reasons that if all things were perishable they all would have perished in the course of time.[31] Hence the very existence of becoming proves the existence of something imperishable. From this one can dialectically deduce the chief characteristics which Plotinus assigns to this reality. For the fact that it is stable seems to imply both its unity and its fullness. It must be full, as any deficiency would disturb its equilibrium.[32] It must be unified, as any dynamic manifoldness would involve change or, at least, split the first existence in two.[33] But fullness and unity are in a sense contradictory. Hence a curious dialectic tries to establish for the superior levels of reality both the individuality of the particular existences they contain and the absence of any divisions. Stability also implies goodness. Only those beings which are deficient break into movement, hoping to achieve through succession and time the completion of their being.[34]

But once the assumption of a stable reality has been made, the great difficulty arises as to how that reality is to be related to the world of change. It is taken for granted that the changing exists

only by virtue of something stable. Even to the Epicureans the world of sense consisted of the constant reconstitutions of eternal atoms. But to Plotinus such a view did not seem to account for the fact that such atoms were constitutive of beings that had a definite organization or form.[35] If by anything, therefore, the permanent must be characterized by having *form*. It is assumed that the perishing forms of sense reality can exist only by virtue of stable exemplars which guarantee their coming into existence, sustain them in their development, and provide for their recurrence. But how are these stable forms to be *productive* of a changing reality? Stability and productiveness seem incompatible. Yet the logic of the system requires *both* a stable superior reality and the origination of the sense world from it. Plotinus thus is driven to the assertion that the productiveness of intelligible being and the One is compatible with immobility.[36] Being implicitly aware of the contradiction and, of course, unable to bridge it by argument, Plotinus resorts to metaphor. He asks us to conceive of the activity of superior beings in analogy to the light irradiating from the sun, or the glow which emanates from fire, or the coldness given off by snow.[37] The illustrations are metaphorical, particularly because they refer to material existences. But the decisive point is that it is only by analogies (and falsely conceived ones, at that) that Plotinus supports his assumption of the productive stability of intelligible beings. People have sought a deep mystery in this conception. This is perhaps just as misleading as the attempt to arrive at a conceptual understanding of it. For once one keeps in mind that by a process of misplaced abstraction Plotinus had separated "levels" of reality, the assumption of a realm of unmoved productivity was an inevitable connecting device for somehow re-binding the levels which had been artificially separated. It is particularly plausible that this connection should be made in terms of productiveness. For the old generation myths which conceived the creation of the world as due to a divine sexual act had still left their mark upon a conception of

causality which regarded the cause as superior to the effect.[38] This biological note in metaphysics can be further found in Plotinus' frequent use of the metaphor of the seed to illustrate the generation of manifoldness out of unified existence.[39]

The key to the assumption of levels of reality is the assumption that the temporal world cannot stay in existence by its own power. Just as individual things in the world of time try to maintain their being but are inexorably destroyed by the encroachment of other beings, so the whole temporal world is held to aspire after a completion of existence which it never achieves.[40] But if there is a superior noetic reality which serves as productive source, support, and goal of the temporal world, it cannot be to Plotinus in any way poorer in content than the temporal world. Thus the conception arises that the several superior levels of reality contain each in their manner all things. Absurd as the conception may seem, it is well motivated. The assumption of levels of reality had singled out certain characteristics of existence, such as unity or stability, and asserted their superiority over their opposites to the extent of actually assigning them to a superior level of reality. But when Plotinus comes to further determine the nature of superior reality, he finds that terms like unity and stability, without the opposites which in their polarity alone give meaning to them, cannot be constitutive of complete reality. Hence motion and manifoldness are introduced in disguise. Thus Plotinus speaks of the activity of the immobile,[41] and a unity in which individuality is brought to supreme completion but in which each individual is coextensive with the whole.[42]

Plotinus distinguishes *several* levels of superior reality because according to him there must be a completely unified reality beyond *nous,* since the world of *nous* is still divided, if only logically, into thinking and object of thought. The unity it achieves must therefore be by virtue of an existence superior to it.[43] Moreover, the very fact that the hypostasis of *nous* involves knowing indicates

a deficiency. For knowing implies distance from the thing known.[44] The arguments which Plotinus uses to show that the activity of knowing implies a distance from the ultimate good sound peculiarly modern. To know is not to possess. Knowing arises only from lack of such possession. The ultimate good is a state of possession or rather being.[45] Does Plotinus then conceive the ultimate good in analogy with habitual activity which is enjoyment without consciousness, activity without obstacle?[46] There is in Plotinus a peculiarly negative evaluation of consciousness, particularly of self-consciousness, as arising only when there are obstacles to and insufficent absorption in activity. The self seems to become simply the focal point of the tension.[47]

A chief moral support for the assumption of levels of reality is found in the fact that Plotinus interpreted the desires of the psyche to point to an existence beyond the world of sense. He finds that no sensuous object can completely satisfy the soul.[48] Here is another point where he at first agrees with the Epicureans, who also had asserted the insatiability of desire. But in contrast to the Epicureans, Plotinus can hold out the prospect of the satisfaction of desire on another level of reality.[49] The assumption that a genuine desire of the soul must find its fulfillment somewhere, accounts perhaps for the belief that the soul can ultimately embrace all being on the level of the One, given its desire to do so. One finds a similar assumption in St. Thomas (*naturale desiderium vanum esse non potest*)[50] and a proof of both the immortality of man and the resurrection of the body from the corresponding *appetitus naturales* (towards the spirit and towards the body) in Ficino.[51] (Contemporary thought, on the other hand, tends to refrain from such co-ordination of desire and existence by either demanding the adaptation of desire to existence or the changing of existence in conformity with desire.)

The significance of Plotinus' position on this point can again be best understood by contrasting it with that of his Stoic predecessors.

The monistic world view of the Stoics, expressed through a reductivistic materialism, implied the denial of the reality of evil. For conduct, therefore, co-ordination with and submission to this *one* universe (*one* because it left open no further possibility) were the consequence. The Stoics compare life in the universe to a play: each actor is assigned a definite role which he cannot alter but must accept if he is to play his part well, his only freedom consisting in playing his role well or badly. Resignation is therefore the key word of Stoic ethics. It is of course true that there were subtle evasions of such detachment. Though most goods of life were considered indifferent to the truly virtuous man, yet among these indifferent things the Stoics came to distinguish some that were *preferable* to others.[52] It is in this way that the suppressed values re-entered and were given a certain legitimacy. But while this modification may have enhanced the practical value of Stoic ethics, it is indicative of its negative character. Far-reaching reservations with regard to ordinary conduct were not accompanied by provisions for activities to take the place of those condemned. In actual practice, of course, for the Stoic philosopher intellectual activity may have taken the place of economic and other activities. But praise of the contemplative life is not necessarily part of the Stoic system. *Facere docet philosophia, non dicere,* exclaims Seneca.[53] This counsel may have served as a corrective for the intellectual, just as the counsel of detachment may have for the man engaged in wordly pursuits.[54] Much of the moral advice the Stoics had to give tends towards being such correctives rather than the delineation of positive objectives. The Stoic image of the ideal man tends to be an empty one. To say this is to indicate the gap between Plotinus and the Stoics. Where the Stoics could only counsel playing the game well, there is no need for such resignation in Plotinus. According to him the soul can rise *beyond* this world into a world where no evil and no suffering exist. He does not have to explain away evil by a forced cosmodicy. Nor does he have

to emphasize submission. Evil exists but it can be escaped by ascending to a reality which does not have to reach completion through the hostility of opposites.[55] Even though ascent means detachment from sense desire, the emphasis of Plotinus' ethics is not upon resignation but upon expansion. He holds out the fulfillment, not the limitation of the desires of the psyche. This explains the enormous difference in tone between Plotinus' ethics and those of his Stoic and Epicurean predecessors. For the Stoic's exhortation to bear things and to practice abstention there was now substituted the spiritual conquest of the true fatherland of the soul.[56] There was also as has already been indicated, a new answer to the Epicureans who had made pleasure the supreme good and yet found that no ultimate happiness was to be found in the satisfaction of pleasure. To Plotinus pleasure could be found only if such fulfillment was sought beyond sense reality; for in the sense world the devouring pace of movement did not guarantee the permanence of any good, and the corporeal served as much as a barrier as a bond.

It has already been suggested that the assumption of levels of reality rests on the conversion of some potentialities of existence into antecedent and eternally existing actualities or on the magnifying of some particular, unachieved goods into superior realities assuming that their possession alone will bring complete happiness. Men are apt to exaggerate the importance of a good they do not possess. If their lives are full of toil, they may think peace a supreme good, forgetting that the idle man will seek any activity, however meaningless, to escape the monotony of rest. Rest is desirable only where there is activity, just as it makes no sense to speak of activity unless with reference to something which is at rest or passive. The terms constituting the superior realities of Plotinus are primarily a series of *correlatives* illegitimately *super*-ordinated to each other, the one above the many, the outer above

the inner, rest above motion, reason above sense, *theoria* above practice.

The conception of levels of reality is founded on the awareness of the possible depths of experience. But it involves an abstraction from that experience. Thus the intelligible aspect of experience is abstracted into a realm of its own and then made superior to and productive of that very world from which it was abstracted and of which it is only an aspect. The assumption of levels of reality separates and then hierarchically superordinates what is found together in existence (just as for other purposes it also merges what is found apart in existence[57]). But in order to disguise the abstractness of each level, there arise such views as the assumption that each level of reality contains all things. Unity then is at the same time fullness, which unity *qua* unity never is. Reason is separated from sensation and yet reason is assigned the characteristics of sensation, such as its image character[58] or its immediacy.[59] (Hence the modern conception of "intuition" which assigns to thought the immediacy of sensation.) Sometimes, conversely, the lower existence is assigned some characteristic of the higher, in order to maintain the continuity of the hierarchy. Practice is considered an incomplete *theoria* which is engaged in by those who cannot grasp ideas unless by means of sensuously concrete objects or sense actions.[60]

The assumption of the productive dependencies of the various levels of reality was implicitly very important for Plotinus because it enabled him to avoid a dualistic conception of the world. To him duality implies a unity in terms of which two things are unified into the unity of duality.[61] If there were any obstacles to the power of the One, neither the One, nor its obstacle, would be the first principle in the universe. But the assumption of the two first principles would be self-contradictory.[62] Hence it is unity itself which is the supreme power in the universe, and everything *is* only inas-

much as it is *one*.[63] As there can be no obstacle therefore to the power of the First existence, it follows that all degrees of that power must be exhausted.[64] This means that this power must evolve to the point where the lowest intensity of power goes over into complete powerlessness. Now complete powerlessness cannot be said to exist. It is just the furthermost limit of power. Plotinus calls that limit matter. In this sense matter seems to be identified with what Aristotle calls privation. But at the same time Plotinus speaks of matter in a way that makes it resemble more Aristotle's "substratum" than his "privation." Matter is given some sort of existence. This makes it possible for Plotinus to account for the imperfections of sense existence and to liken matter to a mirror in which the Forms (which have their origin in the world above) are reflected and distorted.[65] But this is in conflict with the assumption of the unlimited power of First existence and Plotinus is forced into some severe dialectical exercises to fit this more positive conception of matter into his monistic scheme. The only quality of matter, he asserts, is its having no quality at all.[66] It is this very absence of quality which makes it an ideal receptacle of forms. But matter distorts these forms because in the absence of any power of resistance it cannot hinder the encroachment of other forms.[67] Does not this mean that, though matter is denied the quality of resistance, it is unwittingly assigned at least the quality of receptivity? It is beyond the capacity of even a Plotinus to make the existence of non-being plausible. The *causa deficiens* must be identical with some *causa efficiens*. Matter cannot be properly conceived only as a deficiency and not as a cause or condition.[68]

Plotinus thus wavers between ascribing deficiency of existence to the failure of form[69] or to the obtuseness of matter.[70] In the latter case there is often an implicit assignment of an independent nature to matter. But in other places deficiency is considered weakness of form.[71] If Plotinus wished to be consistent in the assumption that matter is only another name for deficiency, he should neither have

thought of it as a receptacle which, like certain mirrors, distorts the forms reflected in it, nor should he have explained evil as due to the presence of matter. The dualisms which Plotinus tries so hard to avoid can hardly be avoided by him because analysis drives him to break up the unities he attempts to establish.[72]

CHAPTER IV

THE FLIGHT TO THE ALONE

THE preceding pages will have made plausible to some extent Plotinus' motivation in turning his back on the world of society. He believed he had found other realities which lacked none of the qualities of the sense world and in addition provided satisfactions which ordinary reality could not provide. Against the strife of opposites and eternal war, intelligible reality exhibited the harmony of all existences without excluding the richness of differentiation. Against the successiveness of time which granted only a fugitive excellence to things, there was the eternity of the superior realms which contained all things simultaneously, each brought to imperishable excellence. Against the frustration in dealing with objects of sense, there was the ceaseless joy of an existence where want and replenishment were simultaneous. To deal with sense reality subjects one to the unstable treachery of matter, whatever one's intentions; for matter is no preserver of form or organization. To act successfully on the level of practice involves one ultimately in the same injustices one might have set out to eliminate; for such action subjects one to the conditions of sense reality which contains evil eternally.

A major part of Plotinus' philosophical effort is devoted to drawing an intellectual map of those superior realities. His greatest handicap in this is that while discursive reason can establish *that* there are transcendent levels of reality, it cannot adequately say *what* they are. Speaking of these realities, therefore, he consciously uses the method of analogy,[1] a method which he can use with some assurance as it is based on the assumption of the hierarchical continuity of all existence. He does not hesitate to develop a set of

categories for the intelligible world different from that of the sense world.[2] To Plotinus the Aristotelian categories are applicable only to a world of change.[3] Ultimately, of course, any categories expressed in discursive language can be applied only to sense reality. But a good deal of the *Enneads* would have remained unwritten if Plotinus had not believed that language could give an approximate description of intelligible reality. It is interesting to note that Plotinus and other Neoplatonists assign a very inferior function to the Platonic method of myth. Myth becomes a form of persuasion,[4] an inferior substitute for rational argument, not a complement to it.[5] (Plotinus is much more of a rationalist than Plato also in the sense that he tends to take literally what Plato meant to be understood symbolically.)

But a decisive question still remains partially unanswered: What is the place of man in this scheme of things? As has been seen, there is a tendency in Plotinus to assign a rather inferior position to man as a being who has his place between the world of psyche and body and who is composed of both. This would seem to assign to man a permanent place on a level of existence which is eternally evil. Nor could there be any hope for an eventual redemption of mankind. For to Plotinus the very existence of evil is a necessary consequence of the existence of good. The denial or the removal of evil would mean the destruction of the good. The former follows from the abundance of the latter.[6] It is even no contradiction when Plotinus argues elsewhere for the beauty of the world of sense; for in its deficiency this world is still a copy of the intelligible world.[7] (All existence, as existence, bears the traces of the supreme existence from which it flows—an argument which was highly influential in bringing Augustine to the Christian God.)

Is Plotinus then to be reckoned among those austere spirits who are willing to regard the nature of things without reading into existence a necessary harmony with their desires, who for the sake of the *fiat veritas* are ready to accept the destruction of a world

of hope? Spinoza was one such man. Holding that God or nature could in no sense be conceived to exert a special providence or love for man, he yet was filled with a love for God or nature for which he was sure there could be no return[8]—an attitude which earned him Goethe's praise of his "grenzenlose Uneigennützigkeit." Hold against this the exclamation of a Ficino: "How does it help you, O theologian, to attribute eternity to God, if you do not attribute it to yourself in order that you may enjoy divine eternity through your own eternity?"[9] Though this exclamation itself contains no claim that human desire must find its cosmic equivalent and satisfaction, this is precisely what Ficino has demanded in his theory of *appetitus naturalis*.[10]

The humanist philosopher takes a position here which implies an interesting contrast to that of his avowed master, Plotinus. It has already been indicated that even though Plotinus removes ultimate goodness far beyond the human sphere, he also holds out to man the possibility of union with this good. Yet, to understand the Plotinian position in its peculiarity, one must realize that even where Plotinus holds out to the human soul the possibility of such ultimate triumph, it is in no sense the achievement of its human essence that he has in mind. It is rather the extinction of man which constitutes the apex of ascent. To him the limitations and the sufferings of man are only a special instance of the deficiency which eternally characterizes the lower degrees of existence. If, in the case of man, this deficiency is to be overcome, it can only be done by a radical removal from the human condition. The price of the eternal existence of the soul, therefore, is its assimilation to the *unconscious* life[11] of the higher phases of existence. Already on the level of *nous,* the psyche has no memory of its sensuous life because such memory, as Plotinus quite correctly states, would require sense organs.[12] To note the peculiarity of this position one should contrast it with that of Augustine who assigns to the redeemed soul a memory of its past, a memory which will resemble

the doctor's not the patient's awareness of disease but which will guarantee to the soul a knowledge not only of its past but also of the eternal misery of the damned.[13] The fact that the soul's ascent did not constitute to Plotinus the gradual actualization of the soul's potentialities but its gradual assimilation to something which is not soul, measures the distance between a Ficino and those like him and Plotinus. It is a significant difference often overlooked, particularly on account of the historical nearness of Plotinus to the more man-centered thinkers of Christianity. Plotinus would never have written a book intended to show the dignity of man, unless he wanted to show how the dignity of man derives its value from the greater value of the Good (as in fact he has done in his book against the Gnostics where the praise of wordly beauty must be understood in this way).

The assertion that the ascent of the soul does not constitute a gradual activation of the soul's potentiality may at first seem to invite criticism. In fact, how is the development of any being to be understood other than as the actualization of something potential? It is at this point that it becomes essential to illuminate the ambiguous nature of Plotinus' use of the concept of psyche. Basically Plotinus' scheme of existence can be likened, in his own image, to a set of radii emanating from a point.[14] That point is the source of all existence and at the same time contains all existences in itself in a superior form.[15] This source is also compared to a seed [16]—the only difference being that a seed contains the existences unfolding from itself potentially, while the One of Plotinus, in which there is no potentiality, contains them actually. It can at once be seen that in such a scheme the assumption of the ascent of one of the lower beings to the originating source would be inconceivable. For the One is conceived as completely actualized. Hence all the beings proceeding from it have their definitive places for all eternity. The realm of time, for instance, reaches its own peculiar excellence in infinite cycles of eternal recurrence.[17] No radius can, as it were,

ever become identical with its center. If it did so, it would leave a gap in existence and either constitute an addition to the One (which is inadmissible) or through the ascent be converted *in nihil.* Plotinus is very much aware of this difficulty. Hence he introduces into his conception of the psyche a duplication of the whole scheme of reality. He attempts to circumvent the dynamic character of ascent —and the attendant introduction of novelty into a world in which all possibilities of existence are already actualized—by assuming that the higher stages of the psyche are already existent on the level of the higher realities.[18] How unsatisfactory this solution is finds expression in the fact that Plotinus now must assign a dynamic character to the self which is said to be able to swing itself up to the various levels of the psyche.[19] This last point might have made more sense if Plotinus had consistently developed the cosmic perspective of his thought. For then he might have granted to the self a temporary intellectual "participation" in superior reality. But, the assumption of a soul would then have been redundant. In general, the question is, what justification the concept of the psyche has, the moment it contains only a duplication of the hypostases.[20]

The possibility of the duplication of levels of reality within the psyche indicates the difference of the psyche from the other hypostases. The other hypostases have a definite place in the hierarchy of realities and a well defined character of their own. However much Plotinus might speak of the yearning of *nous* for the One, he never suggests that it can come closer to it than the act of contemplation. What has been said about *nous* is true *a fortiori* for the hypostasis of body and other hypostases which Plotinus seems to distinguish occasionally (such as *physis*). Only psyche is spoken of as existing on several levels of reality.[21] In what way then are the higher levels of the psyche differentiated from the higher realities themselves? Is this not the place to apply the principle of the *identitas indiscernibilium?*

As has already been said, Plotinus' is a conception of reality in

which all possibilities are already actualized.[22] But the assumption of a reality in which all possibilities are actualized is incompatible with the assumption of a dynamic psyche. The duplication of the hierarchical structure of reality in the psyche is thus a convenient device to assume the various steps of its ascent as already actualized. It is significant that the fundamental difficulty of Plotinus arises precisely at the point where the aspirations of the psyche—for which the good is yet to be achieved—come in conflict with an ontological conception according to which the good is already achieved. The aspirations of the psyche are indeed evidence for the fact that all possibilities are not yet realized and force Plotinus to an implicit recognition of the fact that the good is not realized except through the agency of the psyche.[23]

It is clear, therefore, that the duplication of reality in the psyche is a device introduced to save the conception of the psyche. The glaring inconsistency it implies would have otherwise been obvious to even a lesser mind than that of Plotinus. At times, therefore, when the context permits it, Plotinus quite simply speaks of the psyche as a particular dynamic agent[24] and not one in which all potentialities are already actualized. In such contexts his notion of psyche is quite close to the mythological one, including even a quite literal acceptance of transmigration.[25] The case of transmigration is a particularly interesting one because it shows the complexity with which Plotinus has interwoven the various strands of his philosophy. For though it would seem that transmigration could be assumed only in the context of a naïve psychic dynamism, Plotinus also makes the heroic attempt to fit the notion of transmigration into the context of a static conception of psyche. Transmigration then is ascribed to the differing ways in which the psyche is *reflected* in the sense world, without assuming a descent of the psyche itself.[26] This more or less necessitates making matter responsible for the psyche's transgressions and Plotinus is driven to deny rewards and punishments of the psyche beyond this life, perhaps the chief func-

tion of the transmigration myth.[27] Occasionally Plotinus seems to cast doubt on the very notion of transmigration,[28] as indeed he should in the static perspective.

The conflict between the static and the dynamic conceptions of the psyche has its repercussions in Plotinus' treatment of evil. In the static perspective the use of the term evil has metaphysical but not moral significance. Evil marks the deficiency of lower beings but is itself a necessary consequence of the existence of a supreme power of which all degrees must be exhausted. Thus the descent of the psyche is a cosmic necessity because in so doing the psyche develops its inherent powers and because the world of sense needs its administering care.[29] The term "evil" achieves moral significance only when it is related to liberty, that is, to situations where a being has the choice between two courses of action. This puts the moral perspective in conflict with the metaphysical. The ascent of the soul is declared possible only through a process of moral purification.[30] But if the soul *can* ascend, there must be no ultimate cosmological necessity which keeps it in its present place. Hence its descent, too, cannot be due exclusively to cosmic necessity.

In a system of static hierarchically ordered existences, evil too has its fixed place. There is no room for the creation of goodness or badness through the psyche. On the question of the psyche's freedom Plotinus, like others of the great luminaries of philosophy, is found to attempt the combination of an ethics of freedom with a rather deterministic view of the universe. He speaks of the "arrogance" implied in the psyche's descent which he ascribes to the audacious desire of the psyche to be itself and its forgetting that it can find its own self only in the intelligible realm and beyond.[31] The difficulty is how the psyche living originally on a more perfect plane and endowed with complete knowledge could ever have an inclination to descent without introducing an imperfection into perfected reality. Plotinus therefore tries to soften the notion of descent as much as he can. The psyche is said to be related to the world of

sense only administratively. It, on the whole, remains unchanged in its essence while directing its body.[32] Nevertheless, sometimes, as in a storm at sea, this direction becomes so complicated that the psyche in its care for the body forgets itself and becomes involved in the body's life.[33]

One can make a long list of conflicting passages in the *Enneads* where, in the one group, one finds evil ascribed to the presence of matter or body,[34] and, in the other, to an inclination in the psyche itself.[35] In the former perspective "descent" involves no movement of the psyche but is constituted by its reflection in physical reality.[36] There is no descent in the literal sense; for, in order to maintain the continuity of the hierarchy of realities, the psyche must as much remain at its place as the lower beings at theirs. Descent, statically understood, involves no fault on the part of the psyche. But it does mean the denial of liberty in the sense of freedom of choice. Plotinus states expressly that the higher kind of liberty consists, not in being able to choose between good and evil, but in being able to choose good alone.[37]

Still, side by side with this conception we find another conception of liberty in Plotinus. It is a conception of liberty which makes the psyche an autonomous agent and thus implicitly capable of selecting any of two alternatives.[38] That Plotinus did not develop in detail this conception of liberty is no surprise in view of the fact that it conflicted so much with his assumption of a fixed order.[39] Yet he makes a vague use of it in all contexts where he cannot make the descent of the psyche purely a matter of cosmic necessity and transgression purely a matter of the presence of body. Porphyry, who makes the psyche the origin of evil,[40] does not go beyond his master on this point (except perhaps in a more moralizing tendency). Plotinus too makes the psyche responsible for evil, but he does not consistently maintain this emphasis because he has an ontological as well as a moral conception of evil. Plotinus' difficulty in accounting for descent provides one motivation for the pre-eminence of will in

Augustine. If choice is purely a rational matter, as it tends to be in Plotinus, the psyche, being a member of the realm of Intelligence, would seem to be required to always choose the good and its descent or fall thus becomes inexplicable. For Augustine, however, to achieve the good, intellectual insight must be accompanied by the right volition (something which his own development also suggested to him).[41] He has, therefore, much less difficulty than Plotinus in explaining descent. Plotinus' conception of evil also measures his distance from the humanistic philosophy of a Ficino. To Plotinus the psyche is only affected with evil but never is absolute evil itself. To Ficino there is nothing more evil than an evil man.[42] With evil, as with good, Plotinus is unwilling to assign first rank to man even though his consistency breaks at the point of the efficacy of moral endeavor.

It is clear that the allowance which Plotinus makes for moral endeavor gives a greater eminence to man than his metaphysics would at first permit. The conception of psyche, though redundant in Plotinus' metaphysics, allows the human being a dynamism which Plotinus grants no other being in the universe and so is evidence of the fact that he does not push the implications of a metaphysics centered on an impersonal One to their extreme. But it must be noted that even at those points where Plotinus emphasizes the independent and dynamic character of the psyche most strongly, the goals he suggests for its endeavor are largely impersonal and cosmic. As has been said, he conceives of the ascent of the psyche largely as an assimilation of the psyche to non-human, non-conscious reality. That this tends to mean in fact an extinction, not an expression,[43] of the psyche has already been suggested. Plotinus indeed considers consciousness—which other thinkers have taken to be the chief element of human vitality—as a product of tension. Awareness to him does not enhance the state of happiness. Where there is awareness of a happiness, it is the possession of happiness, not the awareness of it, which counts.[44] However one might weigh the merits of this

argument, it is indicative of an attitude which tries to forget the pains of selfhood by merging the self in the unconscious life of the surrounding world. However faulty Plotinus' logic may be on this point, the moral mood is clearly understandable—a mood which should be discovered amid the dialectical overgrowth of the *Enneads.*

> I would I might forget that I am I,
> And break the heavy chain that binds me fast,
> Whose link about myself my deeds have cast.
> What in the body's tomb doth buried lie
> Is boundless; 'tis the spirit of the sky,
> Lord of the future, guardian of the past,
> And soon must forth, to know his own at last.
> In his large life to live, I fain would die.
> Happy the dumb beast, hungering for food,
> But calling not his suffering his own;
> Blessèd the angel, gazing on all good,
> But knowing not he sits upon a throne;
> Wretched the mortal, pondering his mood,
> And doomed to know his aching heart alone.[45]

It is striking to find in this sonnet by Santayana some of the chief elements of Plotinus' conception of the psyche. There is the same desire to assimilate the psyche to the larger life of the universe. Yet, as in Plotinus, this assimilation is at the same time conceived as the coming into its own of the psyche whose boundlessness was only fettered by the body. To live this life is also death and the good it achieves is one of which its possessor does not have awareness. An important difference, however, between the two philosophers is marked by the fact that Santayana's naturalism allows him to speak of angels and beasts in the same breath, something which Plotinus' hierarchical conception of reality would not permit.

The fact of the identification of supreme existence and the Good

illustrates the pervasiveness of ethical motivations in Plotinus' philosophy. In general, the attribution of goodness to the One has a prime function in setting up the One as a rival and a superior good to the usual goods of man. On this issue, as has been shown, Plotinus is inconsistent. But if the preceding remarks stressed the nonhuman traits of Plotinus' Good and his demand for the psyche's assimilation to this Good, it should also be pointed out that, in reverse, his conception of the Good also bears psychic traits. This is again one of those inconsistencies which served to enhance the plausibility of Plotinus' philosophy; for it makes the realm of the One also the hypostatization of the ideal of experiential completeness —just as the realm of *nous,* in one respect, is the hypostatization of the ideal of scientific completeness.[46]

This double tendency in Plotinus' conception of the Good finds a chief expression in the identification of goodness with fullness, on the one hand, and with end or aim, on the other. The first identification develops from the Stoic emphasis on goodness as the harmony of the whole into the conception of a *plenum formarum.* The universe contains all possible existences; for it would not achieve the maximum degree of goodness if any possible existence were not actualized. This notion has been made famous recently by Professor Lovejoy's *Great Chain of Being.* Thus Augustine asserts that the universe is better for containing beside God his creation.[47] (The rationalist character of the principle of plenitude almost constrains a good God to create; for a good God could not but realize the maximum degree of goodness.) Moreover, the very inequality of things can be derived from the principle of plenitude. *Non essent omnia, si essent aequalia.*[48] All degrees of existence must be exhausted to achieve a *full* universe. (An echo of this principle is still found in the popular saying that it takes all kinds to make a world.)

It is important to realize that Plotinus deviates from this formulation of the principle of plenitude in several essential respects. To say that the universe is better because it contains both God and the

world would mean to Plotinus the assumption of a standpoint *beyond* both, and the postulation of a good or standard superior to both God and the universe.[49] To Plotinus this version of the principle of plenitude would simply be a variation of the conception of providence. To call existence as a whole good is to assume a deliberation which, whether it is engaged in *a priori* by providence or *a posteriori* by man, does not recognize the fact that deliberation does not bring its objects into existence but requires their prior existence.[50] The hierarchy of being to Plotinus is not due to the desire of a benevolent agency to make the world complete by leaving no possible existence unrealized. It is due to the fact that there can be no obstacle to the power of the One.[51] Interestingly enough on this point Plotinus is less rationalistic than Augustine, and it is this difference which Professor Lovejoy has not stressed. In the chief passages he quotes from Plotinus it is not asserted that the hierarchy of realities must realize all possibilities of existence, but only that *sense reality* can achieve completeness solely by expressing through succession and opposition an image of the simultaneous and unified possessions of the intelligible world.[52] Plotinus' might be called a horizontal principle of plenitude, while the one traced by Professor Lovejoy in the *Great Chain of Being* is a vertical one implying a rationalism which Plotinus does not share on this issue. It should be remarked that at some points Plotinus states that, while a deliberating providence cannot be assumed, the universe is as well constituted as if it proceeded from a providence.[53] He fortifies this statement by arguments borrowed from the Stoic cosmodicy. There is some suspicion that Plotinus in such passages may try to have his cake and eat it too. But what makes such remarks plausible to Plotinus is his assumption that sensible reality is the copy of a well-ordered reality.

If Plotinus refrains from identifying the whole chain of being with goodness, he nevertheless identifies fullness with goodness in a horizontal sense, fullness being, however, a necessary, not a sufficient,

condition of goodness. All levels of existence to Plotinus contain in their way all things.[54] What differentiates them is the degree of simultaneity and harmony with which they can bring this completeness to expression. The One is the highest Good because in it goodness does not exclude goods already achieved or yet to be achieved, nor does it separate things even as subtly as things are separated on the level of *nous*. Still, to be good the One must also be full.[55]

But the term "good" also has the meaning of aim or end in Plotinus. Each being is declared to find its good not on its own level of existence but on a superior one.[56] But how can the good of any being be found except on its own *proper* (*oikeion*) level as the good to be achieved is a completion of the being which aspires after it? This difficulty is again due to the fact, already discussed, that Plotinus in one respect conceives the achievement of superior good, not as the completion of some particular being, but rather an assimilation into a transcendent good. In spite of the fact that he breaks up reality into several levels of totalities, the good to which all realities ultimately aspire is one. Even matter, the last product in the chain of realities, which cannot itself produce, attempts to revert to its source, thus becoming constitutive of body.[57]

There are tendencies towards a more pluralistic conception of goodness in Plotinus.[58] He asserts that the world of sense can achieve completeness only in infinitely recurring cycles of the same levels.[59] Here, indeed, is a possible world view according to which each level of reality reaches goodness in its own way and each being within each level achieves goodness by finding its proper place on its level. This would still have made it possible for Plotinus to speak of the greater goodness of other levels of reality. Such a view holds indeed in Christian metaphysics where the goodness of the community of saints is still not identical with that of God. But such a view, which likens existence not to a system of radii streaming from a center but to a system of concentric circles, would for-

ever have kept the human soul on a round less perfect than that of the supreme good. Plotinus, therefore, can in this respect promise more for the human soul than Augustine. Man will not be *with* God or *around* God. (The spatial metaphors stand for non-spatial relationships.) Man will be the highest existence itself. Had some of his Christian admirers fully understood Plotinus on this point, here at least their enthusiasm would have been checked and the pagan philosopher would have been found to speak the language of the ancestral serpent: *eritis sicut Deus.*[60]

But actually the greater possibility which Plotinus can hold out to man is negated by the fact that he can establish less of a continuity between human life and the beatified state than Augustine. Plotinus declares that something is good, not because it is desired, but that it is desired because it is good.[61] This statement again very clearly shows the characteristic Plotinian attempt to assimilate the human psyche to some non-human good. It sets up the good quite apart from human desire and then demands of man to deny some of his most urgent desires for the sake of pursuing an alien good. One feels inclined to invoke the passage from Ficino already quoted:[62] "How does it help you to attribute eternity to God, if you do not attribute it to yourself in order that you many enjoy divine eternity through your own eternity?"

Augustine, as has been mentioned, maintains the continuity of the life of the soul to the extent of granting it a memory of its sense existence in the beatified state. In its emphasis on the resurrection of the *body,* Christianity again showed a "humanistic" outlook quite different from that of the Neoplatonists. The life of the transfigured soul is described in bold strokes in the last chapter of the last book of the *City of God* (after the tentativeness of such an account has been duly noted). The community of saints takes the place of the earthly community. Such communion, however, does not imply the separation of individuals but complete togetherness (*omnia in omnibus*). There will be no cessation of desire, but there also will

be no want. God will be seen eternally. He will be loved without reservation and praised without fatigue. There will be no envy of the superior by the inferior. There will be no freedom *of* choice because there will be freedom from choosing the wrong alternative. There will be memory of the soul's past sufferings and knowledge of the eternal misery of the damned.

Plotinus agrees with St. Augustine to the extent that both hold that the desires of the psyche will be satisfied in a beyond. To provide such satisfaction the conditions of the beyond must be different from temporal reality which is considered to embody perpetual want. Yet they must be sufficiently continuous with temporal reality to provide the ideal end of a psyche entwined in temporal existence. In Plotinus, as well as in Augustine, it is the cessation of certain desires which, it is assumed, will bring happiness. Now there are two ways in which desire can cease, either through its fulfillment or through its elimination. The former, in the temporal context, is only the origin of a fresh desire, while the latter is the kind of peace which only death can bring. Augustine, therefore, demands for the ideal state the simultaneous existence of desire and its satisfaction. But what can this mean, as desire implies the existence of tension and satisfaction its removal, as desire is for satisfaction, and satisfaction is the satisfaction of desire? In Plotinus there is a similar denial of the values of sense reality with their simultaneous indirect affirmation. For peace, order, and permanence are some of the chief characteristics of Plotinus' intelligible reality. Even the rejection of sense and emotion and their relegation to an inferior reality did not keep him from speaking of the joy which the experience of ultimate reality brings.[63] The social community reappears transfigured as the community of intelligible beings—with the pains of separation eliminated as *each* particular intelligible being also is *all* intelligible beings in its particular way.[64]

All these demands for desire simultaneous with satisfaction, for an unchanging individuality identical with the whole, imply the

negation of time and a conception of man who does not *develop* but has all of his "development" simultaneously present. If there is nothing more to be known tomorrow, nothing new to be done, then in sinking back into the unconsciousness of habit, man, as we properly know him, would cease to exist. Even though this tendency towards unconscious habit exists in man, it is constantly fed from a tension—which eventually becomes desire—in man as well as in nature which prevents the life of man from being exhausted in habit. The peace of fulfilled desire without further desire is as little an object of human aspiration as is death; for though both mean the extinction of desire, man cannot break away from desire because his very desires constitute him. It is the fulfillment of particular desires which men seek. Such fulfillment, it is true, is followed by a fresh desire. But it would be wrong to view this fact pessimistically, as the Epicureans tended to do. It is only prolonged frustration which brings misery, while in the orderly sequence of want and satiety, instituted by reason, consists the happiness of man, a temporal being.

It still is an "I" which wants to forget that it is "I." To have one's self absorbed in the universe is an illusion to which the contemplatively inclined mind may deliver itself occasionally. It cannot be achieved, as the very wish springs from particularity. In glorifying the static over the moving, metaphysically and ethically, Plotinus may have singled out the qualities which are less developed in the restless reality in which man lives. But he forgets that it is an active being which seeks peace, and seeks that peace *in* and not *apart from* activity. Man seeks harmony and order. But order in itself is an empty word. It is the order *of* the unordered which is sought. The separation of order from that which is ordered is expressed in the fateful dichotomies of Plotinus, such as the separation of reason and sense or reason and emotion.

It is clear that Plotinus has provided the centuries after him with a powerful metaphysical foundation for the attempt to seek the

good beyond this world, to subject human desire to some non-human good. It is true that in practice as well as in theory there were more or less pronounced deviations from this tendency. But it marks perhaps one important contrast to find modern man in *Faust*[65] translating the "in the beginning was the word" into the "in the beginning was the act." By beginning with the brute and ineluctable fact, he is seeking to introduce *logos* into an existence he has neither made nor which has been made for him. His gospel reads "in the end there will be logos, through the mediation of man." There is a vogue of evolutionary conceptions which translate Plotinus' scheme of hierarchies into a temporal version in which the Good is not the source but the goal of all existence.

CHAPTER V

SCIENCE, MAGIC, AND POLITICS

WHILE, as has been shown, Plotinus shifts between a cosmic and an anthropocentric emphasis, a negative attitude to the life of sense prevails in both perspectives. This explains the neglect of both the natural and the political sciences in the *Enneads*.[1] These sciences are concerned with a reality of inferior rank which is only a temporary abode of the psyche. Moreover, Plotinus believes that the outstanding features of this inferior reality are comprehended in the knowledge of the exemplars from which they flow—that is, to the extent to which their changing character permits any knowledge at all. Higher praise is reserved for mathematics alone (which properly speaking is not a science). Mathematics habituates the mind to be conversant with immaterial objects. It is thus a natural preparation for dialectic where mind and its objects become one and where mind reaches into superior reality.[2]

But to attain this higher knowledge is for Plotinus not only an intellectual but also a moral matter. Knowledge of intelligible reality can be had only on the condition that the psyche has been thoroughly cleansed from attachment to sense.[3] This demand is reminiscent of Aristotle's statement in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that only students whose reason has not been subdued by emotion can profitably study moral science.[4] What Aristotle seems to mean is that the study of ethics requires an acquaintance with certain activities from which the man under the sway of emotion, by his very emotion, is excluded, just as the overexcitement of his emotions keeps him from the adequate exercise of his reason. Moreover, scientific activity requires a certain moral attitude. It is not compatible with untruthfulness. Plotinus similarly understands by

knowledge not only a certain amount of information which could be transmitted to everyone. "Knowledge" to him is also a sort of sensitiveness which opens up further depths of experience. Plotinus is particularly aware of the possibilities opened up by "inner" experience. The world of the spirit cannot be known by the sensuous man as he may know the laws of physics. It is only by a moral change that these areas of experience can be opened up. This is one reason why noetic reality cannot be known through discursive reason. One should not underestimate this view of Plotinus. Much theory fails today—witness our schools—because information alone cannot give knowledge.

Plotinus' conception of knowledge is well expressed in his almost untranslatable assertion that thoughts on the level of *nous* (*noeseis*) are clear sensations while sensations (*aistheseis*) are only obscure thoughts.[5] This sentence summarizes a host of characteristic Plotinian doctrines. It first of all establishes a hierarchical relation between reason and sensation and makes reason the instrument by which reality is clearly known. (Of course, the reality which *nous* knows is itself clear and not obscure like the realm of sense.) Noting, moreover, that reason lacks the immediacy which characterizes sensation, Plotinus assigns to *nous* immediacy also. Hence the connotations of acquaintance and sensitivity in Plotinus' conception of knowledge. Reason and sense which are found together in existence are separated into two realities. But as this relationship requires the assumption of continuity, sensation is in turn assimilated to reason by being declared to be a weak reason. The attempt to give *nous,* though in a superior way, the qualities of sense accounts for the pictorial conception of the objects of *nous* in Plotinus. Assuming the Egyptian hieroglyphs to be a picture language, he asserts that they are more adequate symbols for the objects of *nous* than our letters.[6]

Porphyry, in his biography of Plotinus, asserts that Plotinus had a full knowledge of certain major sciences of his day.[7] The adequacy of this statement is difficult to establish; for there is little in

the *Enneads* either to prove or disprove it.[8] Plotinus is interested in the world of sense and hence in science only inasmuch as it affects the relation of the sense world to the superior realities. It is for this reason that he is interested in delimiting the possible sphere of magical science and of astrology. If the gods could be coerced by magic, intelligible things would be subject to the influence of sense.[9] If the constellation of the stars determined human destiny, the psyche would not be a free agent.[10] But such magical influence can be rejected for the world of *nous* because intelligible reality is completely free from the restrictions of sense matter.[11] It is for this reason also that Plotinus rejects the efficacy of prayer.[12] What Plotinus denies is the influence of the "lower" reality upon the "higher" by way of magic. Even this limited denial is like a breath of fresh air among the theurgic and superstitious practices of Plotinus' age, Plotinus has kept at least the sphere of the divine free from the workings of magic.[13]

But once having dealt with the assumed coercion of the intelligible by sensuous means—which was of central interest to him—Plotinus could afford to be less decided with regard to the place of magic in the world of sense. He may well have believed that there was a good deal of "experimental" evidence for the efficacy of magic[14] (magic and science were to continue for a long time in alliance). One, nevertheless, also finds that Plotinus often offers rather naturalistic explanations of certain occurrences—particularly if magical claims were made in the context of otherwise displeasing doctrines. On some issues Plotinus' very detachment enables him to achieve superiority to the superstitions of his times. He could afford to be more sane because he was so little concerned. Thus in the context of his anti-Gnostic book (*Ennead* II. ix) Plotinus utterly and brilliantly destroys the Gnostic notion, also otherwise popular, that disease is due to the occupation of the body by a demon. With arguments as lucid and conclusive as one could expect from a doctor today Plotinus shows the absurdity of the assumption. He points out

that specific diseases are cured in specific ways (not by some cure-all demon expulsion). If a demon were the cause of disease, surely no medical therapy, such as fasting or the use of drugs, which affect the body, could drive him out. If it is assumed that the demon is attracted by a diseased body, the disease and not the alleged occupation of the demon is the primary factor.[15]

The influence of the stars upon human life is similarly rejected with good argument. The assumption of such influence means, in the first place, endowing the celestial bodies with the passions of men[16]—ascribing, incidentally, the causation of moral perversion to the divine agency of the stars.[17] But the destinies of men are produced by specific causes. Men born under the same constellation do not undergo the same fate.[18] Many specific characteristics of animals and men are due to their immediate ancestors.[19] The lives of men are built on the extent of their efforts, their good or bad talents, the co-operation of other people, the force of circumstance, climate, and luck.[20]

But on the question of astrology we can also perceive Plotinus' hesitation. He rejects the influence of the stars; for that would be incompatible with the freedom of the psyche. But he believes that, on account of the coherence and interconnection of things in the universe, stellar constellations may serve as *signs* of things to happen.[21] This is already a certain concession to astrology. But Plotinus goes further. He grants an influence of magic upon the irrational part of the soul.[22] With the Stoics he assumes a certain all-pervasive *sympatheia* in the universe which binds all things together.[23] Moreover, nature to Plotinus operates "without levers."[24] The denial of the mechanistic aspects of nature thus paves the way for all sorts of qualitative efficacies. A further argument for magic flows from Plotinus' conception of matter's incapacity to resist, on account of its complete passivity, the encroachment of new forms.[25] Any form impressed upon matter is subject to being removed by another. This instability is now viewed as a certain treachery which

makes action upon material reality subject to quasi-magical frustration.[26] The "sympatheia" of all existence together with the passivity of matter might thus be utilized by a man who, himself engrossed in material reality, set out for wordly success.[27] The conclusion is that Plotinus does not completely deny the efficacy of magic and the possible truth of astrological prediction. But he limits their domain to the world of sense—and even there occasionally criticizes it conclusively. Nevertheless, some of his own basic assumptions could lend themselves to a defense of the theoretical presuppositions of magic. (To determine effectively the place of magic, it needed a greater and more prolonged study of the world of sense than Plotinus would have been willing to permit.)

The division of intelligible and sensible reality enables Plotinus, when he comes to treat the relation between body and psyche, to disclaim the value of physiological investigations for the study of the psyche. Had he held the view that body and soul are only two aspects of the same being, the study of the body would have been of prime importance. As it is, Plotinus not only maintains the complete separability of the psyche from the body but also considers such separation a moral demand. When Plotinus says that the composite of psyche and body constitutes the human animal,[28] he seems to come close to the Aristotelian conception of the body-psyche relationship as one of matter and form. But Plotinus ultimately denies such union. The psyche exists separately and it is only a reflex, a sort of irradiation, which enlivens the body.[29] The interesting thing about Plotinus' position, however, is that he makes the body the source of a good many psychical states. Various emotions are ascribed to physical states. In terms of the medicine of his day Plotinus speaks of boiling blood and bile as the originators of wrath.[30] Desire springs from a certain bodily state.[31] Even memory is tied to sense organs.[32] One comes across passages in Plotinus reminiscent of the James-Lange theory of the emotions.[33] But the recognition of the bodily basis of certain emotions and

desires serves Plotinus only to exclude these emotions from the life of the psyche in its pure state. If memory requires sense organs, then the psyche will have no recollection of its association with the body.[34] The activity of the psyche on the level of *nous* can be directed only towards the intelligible and therefore can include neither a direct inspection of sense objects nor an indirect one through memory.

It is only in the case of thinking that Plotinus does not recognize a physical basis. In arguing against the crudely materialistic theory of the Stoics which assimilated the mental act to such physical processes as impressions upon wax, Plotinus believed he had established the immateriality of thinking.[35] (Readers of Augustine know how central this belief was for him too.) But it is evident that in disproving the materialist assertion that the mental process is nothing but a series of physical or physiological changes, he has not shown that mental processes are possible *without* such physical changes.

The attempt to separate psyche and body completely by assigning them to different existential realms finds an obstacle in the fact that all the vital functions would have to be assigned to the body. But, if it is only through the presence of the psyche that the body is alive, Plotinus' difficulty is to explain how the psyche can fail to have the perceptions and emotions which are some of the main constituents of life and which act to preserve the body. What, indeed, would one mean by assuming an association of psyche and body if the psyche remained unaware of the experiences of the body? Plotinus, as we have seen, tries to circumvent these difficulties by a number of devices: Awareness of the body becomes a consequence of the psyche's descent, or it pertains only to the lower parts of the psyche, or is had by the image of the psyche, not the psyche itself. But all these answers are unsatisfactory because Plotinus is concerned with asserting the independent existence of the psyche first and only then tries to square this with the facts

of psychology.[36] On the other hand, all that seems to remain to the disembodied psyche in its purity is intellectual activity. Pleasure, love, desire are confined to the reality of sense because they are dependent on sense organs. Yet to exclude these things from the higher life of the psyche would leave that life impoverished. It is interesting to see, therefore, that quite innocently they are reintroduced by Plotinus under different names. Pleasure is called joy (*eupatheia*),[37] and desire aspiration (*ephesis*). It is assumed that these higher emotions are possible without sense organs. How they are so possible Plotinus does not say.

Plotinus' view of political and social matters parallels the views already described. To him concern for society is concern for the life of the body and involves action in material reality with all the dangers to which such *praxis* is subject. Plotinus, therefore, does not show much interest in the problems of the social world in which he believes evil is eternal and any hope of reform foredoomed to failure, while the obscurity and shiftiness of sense reality permits only an uncertain knowledge in the first place.

In spite of Plotinus' overwhelming rejection of the life of sense, some interpreters have not been able to withstand the temptation of attributing to the great philosopher a more active concern for and participation in the events of his time.[38] Plotinus' teaching activities at Rome coincide with the reign of Gallienus. Porphyry reports that Plotinus was in high favor at court.[39] Perhaps, it has been thought, Plotinus can be enlisted after all as a philosophical contributor to the reform activities of Gallienus? There is enough evidence in the *Enneads* to make it plausible that he might have been sympathetic to an affirmation of Augustean virtues in opposition to sensual excess and the violent and "un-Greek"[40] religious practices spreading everywhere. Might not part of his philosophy have been devoted to such reform recommendations as a second-best alternative for a broader public which could not follow him into the more precise and supersensible parts of his philosophy?[41]

Evidence for such a position seems to be forthcoming from Plotinus' book against the Gnostics with its praise for the sense world. In it Plotinus even asserts that the divine without virtue is nothing but a name.[42] Does not this give a high importance to practice?

Unfortunately, for the commentators here referred to, even the evidence of the book against the Gnostics points in precisely the opposite direction—once the whole context of the book is taken into account. Plotinus' praise of the world of sense is motivated by the fact that the Gnostics' condemnation of the sense world seemed to him to detract from the goodness of the *superior* world of which this world is a copy.[43] His concern, therefore, was primarily for the integrity of the supersensible realms of existence, not the sense world.[44] Similarly his opponents' view that sensuality was no obstacle to the workings of divine grace[45] clashed with his assumption of the purificatory prerequisites of ascent. The divine without virtue is nothing but a name, not because goodness is to be realized in the life of sense, but because purification is the first condition of fleeing it. It is true that Plotinus expresses the belief that the views of his opponents are destructive of the order of the state.[46] But Plotinus himself expresses indifference—at the very least no positive concern—for the order of the state.[47] Hence his use of this stock argument[48] of contemporary controversy is somewhat unfair as it could be turned with equal justice against its proponent. Nevertheless, its use might have been motivated, not by the belief that the order of the state was in itself desirable, but by the conviction that his Gnostic opponents should not destroy a state on which *they,* in their sensuous condition, were still very dependent.[49]

There is a cosmic necessity for the existence of evil. Even when, in the moral perspective, Plotinus shows himself less rigorous, he admits the possibility of escape only for a few philosophical souls. The prospect for social reform is failure. Political conditions could

be improved only through the rule of good men. But good men cannot be expected to rule society; for they would have to descend from the noetic heights they have already attained, once more to defile their souls by contact with the world of matter.[50] All *praxis* to Plotinus is only incomplete *theoria.* It is engaged in by those who have no capacity for the theoretical life.[51] Hence the realm of society is, *a priori,* the domain of bad men.

To those who complain about the bad state of society Plotinus quite realistically replies that they should not be surprised. The bad men work harder to attain their objectives while their opponents try to combat them by prayer.[52] Yet, he cannot allow for an equal activity of good men. The sphere of activity of good men is not here. Again the very detachment of Plotinus from the world of politics gives him shrewd insights similar to those displayed with regard to magic. He does not give himself over to illusions about the way politics is carried on.[53] Yet his insights must remain incidental and without fruit; for the only consequence to be drawn from them is the negation, not the transformation, of social reality.

It seems surprising, therefore, that Porphyry reports a plan of Plotinus' to erect a city on a deserted site in Campania to be named Platonopolis, a plan which only the antagonism of some of Gallienus' advisers is supposed to have frustrated.[54] Unfortunately, Porphyry is not more specific. All that he adds is that it was to be governed according to the laws[55] of Plato. But perhaps we need nothing more. It Plotinus had been concerned with effective political action, he would not have moved away from Rome to influence imperial politics by the erection of a special city. Still, it might be argued that Plotinus wished to erect a model city. A model city for what? Certainly in the third century it was absurd to believe that one could create a model for world politics in the practices of a secluded city state. The very plan to erect a Platonic *polis,* if it had any political implications, would be evidence of the most thorough lack of political insight. Plotinus, of course, may

have lacked such insight. But again it in all probability means missing the mark to look for political intentions—enlightened or unenlightened—in the plan for Platonopolis. There is no evidence in Plotinus' own work that the organization of society was a special interest of his or even one which he would have considered legitimate for a philosopher. A much more simple explanation, therefore, suggests itself for the plan reported by Porphyry. Plotinus very possibly wanted to establish his school in the relative seclusion of the country to be able to have his and his students' investigations pursued with little disturbance. We also know that a great household had accumulated around Plotinus. Influential people had left him their children as wards and there also were many women in his entourage.[56] This may have provided an added incentive to move away from the big city. Bréhier's remark that Plotinus' Platonopolis is Plato's city state "devenue couvent"[57] seems to support the present assertion that the erection of Platonopolis was to serve the more immediate purposes of the organization of Plotinus' school, but not political purposes.

We know from Porphyry that Gallienus and his wife were friends of Plotinus and that a number of high dignitaries were among his listeners.[58] What may Plotinus' attitude have been to his noble friends, so high in a world he did not prize very much? Porphyry very proudly reports[59] that one senator who had been suffering violently from the gout, through the change of his habits, which attending the school of Plotinus involved, had been freed from his affliction. Plotinus, however, might not have put as much weight on this incidental effect of his teaching (which rather betrays the more practical-minded Porphyry). He himself showed contempt for the remedies offered during the illness which was to terminate his life.[60] No, Plotinus must have believed that his noble friends had attained a degree of goodness commensurate to the goodness of their *praxis*. It was only a few who could attain

to the contemplative life. Porphyry reports a particularly charming remark which Plotinus made in defense of his careful protection of the possessions of his wards. They will need the money, Plotinus said, if they do not pursue the philosophic life.[61] The detachment which Plotinus showed in regard to political reality must have marked his attitude towards the emperor. The game of this world's life must be played according to its rules. Unfortunately, the instability of this world makes rationality only to a very limited degree a condition of success. The only possible basis in Plotinus for a reform program would have been such recognition of things that are second-best or third-best. But while in Plotinus' own life this attitude may have been expressed in an affable tolerance, in the *Enneads* it appears as an acceptance, deterministic in mood, of things as they are. There is not a single exhortation in his writings to divert effort away from the attempted realization of the best.

It is easy today to point out the defects of Plotinus' conception of social life. By disregarding society, he did not remove his dependence on it. His very contempt of society implied sharing an idea engendered and supported by his society. His ignorance of his dependence meant the uncritical acceptance of contemporary preconceptions, directly and indirectly. Thus the hierarchical order of his society reappears in his conception of levels of reality as well as in his division of men into an intellectual class, the class of those who are engaged in good practice, and the class of the common crowd whose function it is to serve the needs of their betters.[62] (Christianity was already actively challenging this view.) Moreover, the very despair over social reality subtly mirrors the unacknowledged concern for it. While the flight of the soul from sense reality, that is, from politics and society, emphasizes solitude on the surface, it eventuates in the joining of the *community* of intelligible beings. The "alone" which is ultimately reached is *company* for another "alone." Plotinus' famous phrase of "the

flight of the alone to the alone" is rich in meaning. It mirrors Plotinus' sense of loneliness in an age in which social co-operation and social relations were so precarious and transitory. It mirrors the rationalization which asserts the self-sufficiency of the individual so obviously dependent. It thus subtly mirrors the need of social harmony in the face of a society which frustrates it. It is *union* that Plotinus seeks at the very apex of reality.

It is only in an unguarded remark that Plotinus acknowledges the dependence of his own philosophizing existence on the actual order of society.[63] It is perhaps the greatest defect of his philosophy that this dependence remains implicit instead of being made explicit and subject to control. Christianity as it finally emerged—if perhaps not much more adequate in theory on this point—recognized in practice the urgencies of social co-operation and active work; something which in Plotinus finds only an intellectualist image in the fullness and completely realized activity of the One.[64] The sense of the concreteness of human friendship and association, the specific challenge and richness of one's contemporary experience is sadly missing from the pages of Plotinus.

A few years after the death of Gallienus, Plotinus himself died in loneliness. His disciples had dispersed, perhaps because Plotinus' relation to Gallienus had brought him and his school the disfavor of the new rulers.[65] But birth and death, the rise and fall of emperors, disease, the destruction of cities meant little to the philosopher.[66] He deprecated whatever passing concern he had given to these matters, a concern he thought due to the temporary association of the psyche with the body. These things were only interruptions. But as visitors, while he was writing the *Enneads,* could not interrupt the train of his thought,[67] so his gaze was forever fixed on the things beyond. "Flee the things of this world" remains the key word of Plotinus. The *Enneads* are the guide book to that world sought in the flight, a guide book to an abstract reality hypostatized. But there is a redeeming touch even at the end.

For ironically such guidance springs from a didactic concern for which Plotinus has perhaps little theoretical basis[68] in his philosophy but by which he unwittingly gives honor to a social conception of man he has done so much to obscure.

NOTES

I. PREPARATIONS FOR PLOTINUS IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

1. *Republic* 487b *ff.*; cf. *Letter* vii. 324b *ff.*
2. *Enn.* II. ix. 6.
3. *Enn.* IV. viii. 1.
4. *Republic* 509b.
5. *Letter* ii. 323e.
6. *Parmenides* 137 *ff.*
7. *Phaedo* 67b *ff.*
8. *Symposium* 210e *ff.*
9. *Phaedrus* 249d *ff.*
10. *Phaedrus* 246c.
11. *Theaetetus* 176a-b.
12. *De vita Plotini* 14.
13. Cf. Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 14. Bréhier in his edition of the *Enneads* has traced many direct and indirect references to their sources (see the indices in Vol. VI). This is particularly instructive with regard to the Hellenistic sources.
14. *Enn.* VI. i–iii.
15. *Enn.* I. i; IV. iii. 9–iv 29.
16. *Enn.* II. v. 1–3.
17. *Enn.* I. v.
18. *Enn.* III. i.
19. *Enn.* III. ii, iii.
20. *Enn.* I. ix; cf. iv. 7.
21. *Enn.* I. vi, especially 1–2.
22. *Enn.* IV. iii. 26; vi. 1–3; vii. 4; VI. i. 25–30.
23. *Enn.* IV. iv. 32 *ff.*
24. *Enn.* III. ii. 15, 17.

25. *Enn.* I. iv. 7 (p. 71; l. 7 *ff.*, Volkmann); I. v; I. vii. 3.

26. *Enn.* VI. vii. 24, 29.

27. *Enn.* VI. vi, especially 4, 9, 15.

28. *Enn.* II. iii; III. i. 5, 6; IV. iv. 30–45.

29. *Enn.* IV. iv. 40–44.

30. *Enn.* III. iv.

31. Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* 5th ed., Berlin, 1934–1937, Xenophanes A 29; Parmenides B 8, lines 5–6; Heraclitus B 50, B 10; Empedocles B 17, lines 1–2. (For criticisms see Aristotle *Metaphysics* 992b 9 *ff.*, Theophrastus *Metaphysics* viii. 26.

32. Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony,* line 120; Parmenides B 13.

33. Empedocles B 17.

34. The self is all things (*Enn.* IV. iv. 2); the sensible universe contains all things (*Enn.* VI. vii. 11); the psyche is all things (*Enn.* III. iv. 3); *nous* is all things (*Enn.* III. viii. 8; V. i. 4; VI. ii. 18); the One is all things (*Enn.* V. iii. 15). In *Enn.* V. iii. 15–16 the fullness of the One is reconciled with its unity. In *Enn.* VI. ix. 2, V. v. 13 it is said that the One is not all things; but in these contexts "all things" is understood as the products of the One.

See also E. Bréhier, *Ennéades,* VI, 1re partie, Paris, 1936, 35–36, "Plotin refuse en somme complétement de voir sa théorie des hypostases interprétée (ainsi qu'il serait facile de le faire du néoplatonisme de Proclus) comme un simple classement du réel où la première hypostase serait seulement le premier genre; c'est que chaque hypostase contient à sa manière le réel tout entier et que chacune n'ajoute rien à la précédente, comme l'espèce ajoute au genre, mais est au contraire en déficience, comme le produit l'est par rapport au producteur (III, 9–20) = VI ii 3."

35. Cf. *Enn.* II. ix. 4, 16, 17.

36. Cf. Aristotle *Metaphysics* xii. 10.

37. For example, *Enn.* V. ix. 3.

38. *Timaeus* 28a.

39. Philo *De opificio mundi* 16–19.

40. *Enn.* IV. iv. 16; cf. Aristotle *De caelo* i. 10 (particularly 280a 7).

41. The discussion of dialectic in Albinus' *Didaskalikos,* Chap. v (pp. 156–158, Hermann) indicates well the fusion of the logical procedure

of generalization with the ontological rise to superior existences. Plotinus asserts the fullness of *genos, Enn.* VI. ii. 19. See also page 80, note 67. For a discussion on why generic forms are considered richest in content see F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge,* London, 1935, pp. 268–273. For a criticism see Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1038a 5–6: Either (1) genus is not separated from the differentiae or (2) genus is matter, not form.

42. *Enn.* II. ix. 1.

43. Anaxagoras A 30; Jaeger, *Paideia,* I, 151, ascribes a similar statement to Pythagoras.

44. Cf. Cicero's statement "homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum" (*De natura deorum* ii. 14, 37) and contrast it with Seneca's "facere docet philosophia, non dicere" (*Ep.* 20. 2). Seneca nevertheless wavers between asserting the primacy of theory and that of practice (see Ueberweg-Praechter, *Die Philosophie des Altertums,* Berlin, 1926, pp. 491–492, for references.) See also Cicero *De off.* i. 44, 138; Diogenes Laertius vii. 130; Albinus, *Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato,* p. 151 (Hermann).

45. *Enn.* III. viii. 4, 6, 7.

46. *Enn.* IV. iv. 43.

47. For example, *Enn.* V. i. 6.

48. Cf. *De rerum natura* ii. 16–18.

49. *Enn.* V. i. 1.

50. Thales A 22, 23.

51. A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being,* p. 48.

52. *Sophist* 251a.

53. See J. B. Skemp, *The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues,* Cambridge, 1942, pp. 17 *ff.* (from which the translation of the *Sophist* passage is taken) for a discussion of the passage. See also Aristotle *Metaphysics* 991b 3–6.

54. In Plotinus material reality is produced by intelligible reality.

55. *Definitions* 411a.

56. Variations of this argument occur throughout Sextus' discussion of cause in *Adv. Math.* ix. 195 *ff.*

57. *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* I, 449, lines 1 *ff.*

58. Von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta,* II, 306, frag. 1027.

59. *Adv. Math.* ix. 13–194.

60. *Metaphysics* A 9.

61. *Enn.* III. i. 3.

62. *Enn.* III. viii. 2 end; see also the following two notes.

63. *Enn.* III. v. 3; V. ii. 2; VI. iv. 10. Cf. Carl Göring, *Über den Begriff der Ursache in der griechischen Philosophie,* Leipzig, 1874, p. 41, on the less developed Stoic version of this invidious distinction of cause and effect.

64. *Enn.* III. ix. 3; V. v. 6; V. vi. 6.

65. *Enn.* II. v. 3.

66. See page 78, note 34.

67. The intelligible world, being comprehensive, has a tendency to exhibit the generic traits of existence; but its fullness—the bringing to perfection of all possible existences—demands individualities. The conflict of individualizing with generalizing tendencies takes up a good part of Plotinus' dialectic and finds expression in the attempts to reconcile with each other in the intelligible realm fullness, simplicity or oneness, ideality, and universality.

68. *Enn.* V. iv. 2; V. i. 6, ii. 1; see page 91, notes 15 and 17.

69. This is a hypostatization of the active aspect of interaction. See *Enn.* VI. i. 18.

70. This is particularly clear in Plotinus' discussion of matter. See *Enn.* III. vi. 14, 15.

71. *Enn.* V. ii. 1. *Enn.* IV. iii. 9, 10 combines the two views referred to in this and the preceding note. (Plotinus must reconcile his conception of levels of reality, each full in its own way, with the assumption of hierarchical causation.)

72. The One is cause of the cause (*Enn.* VI. viii. 18). But there are, in a certain sense, other first-beginnings, such as man (*Enn.* III. ii. 10). The One is even called infinite because no limit to its power can be assumed (*Enn.* VI. vii. 32, VI. ix. 6).

73. Note also Plotinus' rather Bergsonian notion of the causal power of nature which he describes as non-mechanistic (*Enn.* III. viii. 2).

74. *Enn.* III. ii. 16. See also the Peripatetic work *On the world,* Bekker's edition of Aristotle's works, Berlin, 1831, p. 396b 7–8.

75. *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta,* II, frag. 1211 (from Cicero's *De*

divin. ii. 33), "distantium rerum cognatio naturalis . . . quam *sympatheian* Graeci appellant." Cf. Marcus Aurelius ii. 1. See Karl Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie,* Munich, 1926, p. 23, note 5; Werner Jaeger, *Nemesios von Emesa, Quellenforschungen zum Neuplatonismus und seinen Anfängen bei Poseidonius,* Berlin, 1914, p. 14–15. For post-Stoic use of *synaphe* see A. D. Nock, Sallustius, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe,* Cambridge, England, 1926, pp. xcviii–c.

The notion of *sympatheia* is allied with the notion that the world is a big animal organism (cf. Plato *Timaeus* 30b; *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta,* II, Part II, chap. ii, sec. 11; Diogenes Laertius iv. 142; Plotinus *Enn.* IV. iv. 32, Proclus *In Rem publicam* ii. 258. 18 *ff.* Kr.)

76. Karl Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie,* p. 50, note 2, says: "Poseidonius hatte die Lehre von der Sympathie zur Grundlage seiner physikalischen Erklärung der gesamten Mantik, insbesondere auch der Astrologie gemacht."

77. *Enn.* IV. iv. 32 *ff.*

78. *Enn.* III. ix. 3 (Volkmann); IV. ii; V. ii; VI. iv, v.

79. *Parmenides* 137 *ff.*

80. *Metaphysics* 1072b 3.

81. *Metaphysics* 1040b 23–26, 992a 8–9, v. 6 and 7, ix. 1; *Physics* 185b 6; *De anima* 412b 8.

82. *Parmenides* 141e; cf. Gorgias, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* B 3. It is almost a surprise that Gorgias' playful utterances escaped being taken as the revelation of the most arcane wisdom; for he starts out with the assertion that nothing exists.

83. *Enn.* V. v. 13.

84. The very difficulties that the Stoics had in maintaining an immanentist position makes the rise of more transcendentist philosophies very plausible.

85. *On the World* 398b 4–10. Note in this passage also the influence of social institutions on the development of the conception of transcendence.

86. See E. R. Dodds, "The 'Parmenides' of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic 'One,'" *The Classical Quarterly,* XXII (1928), 129–142 (p. 136); Ueberweg-Praechter, *Die Philosophie des Altertums,* p. 531, on Eudorus who (apud Simplicium *Ad Phys.* 181. 10 *ff.*) makes the

Pythagoreans distinguish a double one. The first One, which is also the supreme deity, is the last ground of all being. From it proceeds a second One and the indefinite dyad.

87. "A fiery breath which thinks" (Dodds, "The 'Parmenides' of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic 'One,'" p. 131); God is *corpus, Stoicorum veterum fragmenta,* II, frags. 1028–1048; cf. frags. 790–800 on the corporeality of the soul.

88. See page 78, note 39 and also *Legum allegoria* iii. 29.

89. *Enn.* V. iv. 2; VI, ix. 2.

90. *Enn.* VI. ix. 2. See also Proclus *In Platonis theologiam* ii. 4 where Proclus argues against those who consider *nous* the supreme existence. In Numenius the supreme existence is *nous* (Proclus *In Tim.* i. 303. 27 *ff.*).

91. Paul O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino,* New York, 1943, p. 229.

92. See Bruno Switalski, *Plotinus and the Ethics of St. Augustine,* New York, 1946, pp. 26–28, for full references to the various views on Plotinus' relation to non-Greek philosophy. Switalski himself concludes tentatively: "Plotinus in the main keeps closely to the line of ancient Greek philosophy and particularly to that of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoa."

The reader's attention is called to the fact that Switalski's book contains a full bibliography of books and articles on Plotinus. The most complete bibliography of Plotinic studies is that by Bert Mariën, *Bibliografia critica degli studi plotiniani,* Bari, 1949, 273 pp.

II. THE NATURE OF PLOTINUS' "MYSTICISM"

1. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia,* trans. by Gilbert Highet, I, 150.

2. Thucydides, *History,* ii. 40. 3 (the translation is that of Crawley).

3. See Jane E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion,* 2d ed., Cambridge, 1908, p. 8.

4. *Anechou kai apechou,* Epictetus frag. 10.

5. See page 79, note 44 and the discussion on page 8.

6. Von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta,* III, 110, frag. 456. Cf. frags. 461, 262, 266, 274, 275, 431. See also page 102, note 37.

7. See page 65.

8. Raissa Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together,* trans. by Julie Kernan, New York, 1942, pp. 96–97.

9. *Enn.* IV. viii. 1.

10. "Who has had the vision, knows what I am talking about" (*Enn.* VI. ix. 9; I. vi. 7; cf. VI. vii. 40) sounds like a formula in the Greek. René Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin,* Paris, 1921, p. 278, note 3, cites Pausanias (I, XXXVIII, 4) who uses the same words.

11. *Enn.* VI. viii. 13; V. iii. 6.

12. *Enn.* VI. vii. 34–36.

13. *Enn.* II. ix. 1.

14. *Enn.* VI. ix. 4.

15. *Enn.* IV. viii. 7; V. i. 10; iii. 2, 4, 9; v. 1; viii. 3.

16. Thus in Plotinus there are often under the guise of conceptualness very definite sensuous images. The description of unification in *Enn.* VI. vii. 34 reads like a love poem. The union with the One is frequently described as a "touching." The term "unification" itself is sexual in character. In *Enn.* VI. vii. 35 the experience of the One is compared to drunkenness. (Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 3 describes an interesting phase in Plotinus' sexual development.)

In *Enn.* I. vi. 8 Plotinus compares the sense world to a Narcissus image. This is what up to a certain point it must have been for him. Hence he sought elsewhere the "reality" which he could not find in the sense world.

17. Cf. Thomas Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists,* 2d ed., Cambridge, 1928, p. 100, "the possibility of the experience is inferred from the system, not the propositions of the system from the experience." René Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin,* p. 269: "pour déterminer les conditions et les caractères de l'union extatique, Plotin n'a guère recours aux données de l'expérience, il les déduit au contraire comme des conclusions." François Picavet, "Plotin et les mystères d'Eleusis," *Revue de l'histoire des religions,* XLVI (1903), 281–297, comes to the following conclusion (p. 293): "Plotin . . . superpose sa philosophie à toutes les parties constitutives et essentielles des Mystères . . . Il pense bien moins à défendre les anciennes croyances qu' à faire accepter son système. S'il invoque les mythes, les Mystères ou même les

croyances populaires, c'est surtout pour montrer qu'il les complète, et qu'il en donne l'explication la plus satisfaisante. Comme l'écrit Olympiodore . . . , Plotin, Porphyre . . . attribuent le premier rang à la philosophie." See also George Boas, "A Source of the Plotinian Mysticism," *Journal of Philosophy,* XVIII (1921), pp. 326–332 for an attempt to point out some of the "deductive reasons which led to Plotinus's mysticism."

With regard to the imagery which Plotinus occasionally uses to describe the experience of the unification with the One, one obvious source are Plato's dialogues and the Platonic tradition. Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin,* p. 276, has suggested another possible source: "Une conjecture très vraisemblable est qu'il se souvient des mystères où l'on mettait en scène devant les initiés, comme un spectacle riche en enseignements, certaines traditions mythologiques. . . . De plus, nous avons noté qu'essentiellement l'extase était la contemplation d'une grande lumière, *phos* (V. 5. 7; VI. 9. 9). Plotin ne dit-il pas que c'en est le criterium (V. 3. 17–II. 202[12])?—Or, c'est aussi ce qui frappait le plus vivement dans les cérémonies nocturnes de l'initiation, lorsque les portes du *megaron* s'ouvrant, les hiérophantes montraient aux mystères assemblés dans le *telesterion* les effigies sacrées (*hiera*), baignées de clartés éblouissantes." See also p. 277, "Philon, quand il parle de l'extase, pense souvent à ce que disent les Livres Saints des prophètes inspirés; Plutarque pense aux oracles; Plotin à l'initiation mystique."

It is the language of conceptual systems already developed which the mystic uses. An interesting comparison is offered by Aldous Huxley's account of a post-anaesthetic experience: "Returning awareness began with pure visual sensations . . . just colored patches, existing in and for themselves, unrelated not only to the external world, but also to myself" (*The Art of Seeing,* p. 46). This passage reads almost like a quotation from the book of a philosopher from the British sense data school. Coleridge, on the other hand, describes a similar experience in more Plotinic terms: "In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep. . . . The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose

up before him as *things,* with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort" (from the Preface to *Kubla Khan*). Note the reification of mental images and the asserted union of things and expressions, parallel to Plotinus' identification of Being and *nous.*

18. *Enn.* V. iii. 11, 13, 14; V. i. 4; v. 5, 10, 13; VI. ix. 6. It is not intended to deny the dialectical considerations as well as the historical precedents which enter into the formulation of the passages here referred to.

19. *Enn.* I. viii. 8.

20. *Enn.* III. vii. 4. Cf. Aristotle *Physics* 247b 10–11.

21. *Enn.* V. ix. 35–38; V. v. 1; V. i. 4.

22. Thus Plato's emphasis on "synopsis" ultimately led to the strangest *coincidentiae oppositorum.*

23. For example, *Enn.* V. iii. 5; V. v.

24. Cf. *Enn.* II, ii. 2.

25. Tactile and visual terms are used to indicate the nature of this experience. See *Enn.* V. v. 6; VI. ix. 11; VI. vii. 40; cf. V. iii. 10.

26. Hence some sort of awareness is assigned to the One. See page 98, note 44.

27. *Enn.* VI. ix. 9.

28. It is not intended to understress the distinction that Plotinus makes between the experience of *nous* and that of the One. See Paul O. Kristeller, *Der Begriff der Seele in der Ethik des Plotin,* Tübingen, 1929. It should also be emphasized that the Plotinic vision is ontological, not epistemological, in character. This means that it involves not only the enlightenment of the subject but also the disclosure of ontologically superior objects.

29. Cf. p. 83, note 17. Evelyn Underhill, "The Mysticism of Plotinus," *The Quarterly Review,* CCXXXI (1919), 479–497, writes (p. 492): "That unity of witness, which is one of the most impressive facts in the history of mysticism, may reasonably be regarded as evidence of the reality of that world of spiritual values which contemplatives persistently describe. But this same unity of witness depends closely, on its literary side, on the fact that these contemplatives, however widely separated by time and formal creed, so constantly explain their adventures to

other men by means of conceptions drawn from the Plotinian scheme, which has proved itself able to rationalise and find room for the deepest spiritual intuitions of the race." Note that in the second part of the quotation it is asserted that the unity of witness depends on the unity of tradition. This takes much force out of the first assertion. But even apart from this, the unity of witness can*not* "reasonably be regarded as evidence of the reality of that world of spiritual values" described. For first of all, that very unity may be doubted. But even if it is granted, it should lead to an investigation of the many possible causes of such similarity of assertion rather than straight to the assumption of the objective truth of the contents of the mystics' declarations. A postulated unity of love poetry, for instance, would not justify the assertion that women ever possessed the qualities ascribed to them in these poems. But it would be interesting to investigate the factors which led men to these particular expressions of their emotions.

At this point attention should be called to the fact that Plotinus' assertion that the higher parts of the psyche already exist on the level of the higher parts of being and his repeated assertion that the more intense activities go on without awareness have been interpreted to imply a conception of the unconscious. Plotinus' discussion of consciousness is indeed highly interesting. But it seems to me that he is much further removed from the views of von Hartmann or Jung than some critics seem to assume. Of course, many things that Plotinus says may be taken as evidence of the existence of some sort of unconscious realm. But this does not mean that Plotinus himself had a clear conception of the implications of his assertions, particularly as there are strong dialectical motivations to the assertions in question. (We shall try to show in the following two chapters that the conflict between the dynamic and the static tendencies in Plotinus' system is a prime source of the distinction of several psychic levels.) See Hazel E. Barnes, "Neo-Platonism and Analytical Psychology," *Philosophical Review,* LIV (1945), 558–577, for an attempt to relate Plotinus' views to Jung's conception of the collective unconscious, and Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin,* Appendix B, "Plotin et la philosophie de l'inconscient," for a criticism of A. Drews' attempt to discover von Hartmann's unconscious in Plotinus.

30. Cf. Irwin Edman, "The Logic of Mysticism in Plotinus," *Studies in the History of Ideas,* II (1925), 51–81 (p. 77), "But the One is something more than the posited perfection of intellectual experience. The One . . . is the central source of beauty sensed and sought by the artist, the ultimate and original flame of love in which the lover invited by its remote visible embodiment, unwittingly wishes to be wrapt. . . . It is the end of all action and endeavor, logical, moral and aesthetic, as it is the source of all that is."

31. Plotinus uses the word *hoion* frequently to indicate the metaphorical character of a phrase (for example, *Enn.* VI. viii. 7; VI. ix. 3). If Plotinus is called a mystic at all, he should be called a "conceptual" mystic in distinction from "pictorial" mystics.

32. Plotinus occasionally wants it both ways, and then asserts that even though this universe is not the product of a deliberating providence, it is of such a nature as if it had sprung from a deliberating providence (*Enn.* VI. vii. 1). Plotinus here commits a mistake, familiar from pantheism, which confuses the fact that there is a *reason* for everything with a *justification* of everything (in terms of the particular thinker's special goal). Note Santayana's censure: "Pantheism, in teaching that the world ought to be full of horrors, since so it is, accepts the most savage of ideals." ("Plotinus and the Nature of Evil," *Obiter Scripta,* New York, 1936, pp. 68–87, p. 83.)

33. This has been done by working out some of the elements in the tradition which served as bases for Plotinus' thought rather than by arguing with those interpreters who seek Egyptian, Indian or other oriental sources for Plotinus. It seems to me that their attempts are open to at least three objections. They do not show specific channels of transmission. They rely on a too general resemblance of doctrines. They neglect long-established trends in the Greek tradition itself, such as Orphism. See p. 82, note 92 for a bibliographical reference. See also Erik Peterson, "Herkunft und Bedeutung der *MONON PROS MONON*—Formel bei Plotin," *Philologus,* LXXXVIII (1933), 30–41, who traces, against Cumont, the origin of this characteristic formula in Greek literature; A. H. Armstrong, "Plotinus and India," *The Classical Quarterly,* XXX (1936), 22–28; and E. R. Dodds, in the article already referred to.

34. 1. Cf. Augustine *De civ. Dei* x. 31; xi. 4.

35. 2. See below, note 37.

36. Cf. *Enn.* II. ix. 9.

37. Cf. the discussion of providence on pp. 33 *f.* The pagan gods play a subordinate and often metaphorical role in Plotinus. To seek something like the Christian God in the One of Plotinus is part of a trend, very familiar in the case of Plato and Aristotle which has given certain isolated and often obscure passages in these authors an emphasis hardly justified by the bulk of their writings, but justified of course in terms of the interests of a later philosophy. (Plotinus himself occasionally calls the One *theos*. But this is an adjectival use of the word, familiar in ancient authors.)

Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin*, p. 49, writes: "Mais le sentiment accablant de l'infime créature en présence de son Créateur il ne semble pas le connaître, ni le cris confiant de l'âme opprimée vers un Rédempteur, ni la tendre piété que permet la foi en la paternité de Dieu, ni l'adoration soumise que commande son infinie majesté, ni la confusion de l'âme pécheresse en face de la sainteté offensée." Arnou, nevertheless, calls Plotinus' One "God" because "a vrai dire, le principe qui répond le mieux à nos idées sur la divinité, c'est l'Un puisqu'il est le seul absolument indépendant" (p. 128). It seems to me that the reason given by Arnou is not sufficient to apply the term God to the One. There are in this term too many implications of what Arnou describes in the first quotation. (It should be noted that the title of Arnou's book is misleading because his study is much more comprehensive than its title indicates. This is said because it seems to me that Arnou's book deserves more attention than it apparently has received.)

38. It is for such reasons that Plotinus has occasionally been called pantheistic. But to Plotinus, pantheism could, among other things, neither have accounted for the existence of evil nor have left room for any purer realms of reality.

39. E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, London, 1936, pp. 51, 61, 82–83.

40. *Enn.* V. v. 13; cf. 6.

41. One can find, in certain contexts, just that subordination of the

good to existence ("He is perfect because He is") which Gilson denies to Platonism (*The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy,* pp. 54, 55). See *Enn.* V. viii. 7, particularly lines 11–12 (p. 240 Volkmann).

42. For example, *Enn.* V. v. 10; Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy,* pp. 55–56.

43. For example, *Enn.* V. v. 6.

44. Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy,* p. 82.

45. Augustine realized this well. See his *Confessions* vii. 20, 21. See also A. von Harnack's edition of the fragments of Porphyry's fifteen books "Gegen die Christen," Berlin, 1916, frags. 52, 54. The pagan Neoplatonist, from the intellectualism of his position, cannot understand that certain truths should be veiled to the wise and yet revealed to the simple.

46. It may be of interest to note another attempt, similar to that of Gilson, of asserting the originality of one's favorite doctrine or author. H. A. Wolfson, *Philo,* Harvard University Press, 1947, writes (II, 160): "Second, there is Plotinus. In many places he repeats the statement that God is ineffable (*arretos*), that 'He has no name' or that to Him 'no name is really suitable,' and that 'He cannot be grasped by thought,' or that 'we have of him neither knowledge nor thought.' All these views about God, as we have seen, do not occur in Greek philosophy before Philo." Hence Plotinus must have derived them directly or indirectly from Philo, even though no channels of transmission can be traced. But the embarrassing thing about Professor Wolfson's assertion is that the passages from the *Enneads* quoted by him are themselves direct quotations from the *Parmenides* of Plato. It might be added that Professor Wolfson's attempt to make Philo the originator of the conception of the unknowability of God, and his consequent arguments that preceding thinkers, such as Plato or Aristotle, do not share this conception of God, put the problem into a forced perspective. It seems to me that Plato's and Aristotle's, to a large extent even Plotinus' conceptions of "God" are so different from that of Philo's to make any comparison one between incommensurables.

47. Sallustius, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe,* ed. by A. D. Nock, Cambridge, 1926, iii.

III. LEVELS OF REALITY

1. *On the Sublime* 44.

2. See Max Wundt, *Plotin,* Leipzig, 1919, pp. 36–37; the studies of Alföldi cited in notes 3 and 6; M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire,* Oxford, 1926, pp. 406 *ff.*

On Gallienus' relation to Plotinus see Chapter V.

3. Andreas Alföldi, "Die Vorherrschaft der Pannonier im Römerreiche und die Reaktion des Hellenentums unter Gallienus," in *Fünfundzwanzig Jahre römisch-germanische Kommission,* Berlin and Leipzig, 1930, pp. 11–51 (Archäologisches Institut des deutschen Reiches), asserts, pp. 19–20, that Gallienus aimed at monotheism in order to strengthen the imperial rule.

4. Julian *Misopogon,* delivered at Antioch.

5. See St. Irenaeus (i. 6), as quoted by M.-N. Bouillet in one of his copious notes to his translation of the *Enneads,* I, Paris, 1857, p. 298.

6. A. Alföldi, "Zur Kenntnis der römischen Soldatenkaiser," II, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik,* XXXVIII (1928), p. 184.

7. *Felicitas aeterna, Securitas perpetua, Abundantia Augusti* (Alföldi). See also Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire,* p. 417.

8. *Enn.* III. ii. 15; cf. I. iv. 7; vi. 7.

9. See Friedrich Solmsen, *Plato's Theology,* Cornell University Press, 1942, p. 55, for an interesting discussion of what the opposition of "Chance" to "Reason" meant in the age of Plato in terms of the struggle of reason against the emotional irrationalism of Dionysian religion. See also p. 119 for a discussion of the relation of man to the universe in Plato, and chaps. ix and x for a discussion of *Laws* X.

10. For an interesting reflection of this approach see Philo *De opificio mundi* 3, where the harmony of the universe with the law of Moses is asserted.

11. If "order" is an argument for providence, the "disorder" is an argument against it. See Lucretius *De rerum natura* v, lines 110–234.

12. Lucretius *De rerum natura* ii, lines 1 *ff.*

13. *Enn.* V. ix. 8; VI. vii. 1.

14. *Enn.* V. iv. 1. Bréhier, *Ennéades,* V, Paris, 1931, p. 80, note 1,

remarks on this chapter "dans la cadre plotinien, c'est la vie qui forme les extrêmes, et la conscience réfléchie est l'intermédiaire; intermédiaire entre une vie supérieure à la conscience, qui sourd de l'Un, et une vie inférieure." See also page 92, note 47.

15. *Enn.* VI. vii. 1.

16. *Enn.* IV. iii. 18.

17. *Enn.* V. i. 6; V. viii. 7.

18. See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being,* p. 329 *ff.*

19. *Enn.* V. viii. 7.

20. *Enn.* VI. viii. 9–11; *Enn.* IV. iii. 12, Plotinus says of the psyche that "its wandering is in accordance with a system of order."

21. Cf. *Enn.* III. ii. 8.

22. Porphyry provided Usener with a large number of fragments for his *Epicurea* (Leipzig, 1887). See p. lviii *ff.* and *index fontium,* p. 436.

23. For example, *Enn.* III. ii. 8.

24. *Enn.* VI. ix. 11.

25. *Enn.* VI. vii. 35.

26. Cf. *Nic. Ethics* i. 6, 7.

27. All existence aspires to the one supreme Good (for example, *Enn.* VI. vii. 20). When, as in *Enn.* VI. v. 1, it is said that the good is found in the individual *proper,* this is not a pluralistic note, but a stress on inwardness.

28. *Enn.* III. ii. 14; cf. II. ii. 2 beginning; VI. ii. 22.

29. See *Enn.* I. viii for the attempt to justify the existence of evil without either excusing it or explaining it away. It is only on the basis of a transcendent approach that such a solution is possible and Plotinus is spared many awkwardnesses of the Stoic cosmodicy. To Plotinus evil can be avoided not, as with the Stoics, by co-ordination with, but by flight from the world.

30. *Enn.* VI. vii. 27; vi. 44.

31. This principle is enunciated, f. i., with regard to psyche in *Enn.* IV. vii. 12; cf. *Enn.* VI. viii. 9.

32. For example, *Enn.* III. viii. 11.

33. For example, *Enn.* V. iii. 10.

34. *Enn.* III. vii. 4, 11. In other contexts (cf. *Enn.* V. i. 6) the empha-

sis is upon productivity as a cosmological necessity and a consequence of abundant power.

Cf. Nietzsche: "That everything returns, is the extreme approximation of the world of becoming to that of being:—pinnacle of speculation (XVI, 101)." "Eternal recurrence unites the two extremes of thought: mechanism and Platonism (XVI, 396)." (Quoted by G. A. Morgan, *What Nietzsche Means,* p. 290.)

35. *Enn.* III. i. 3. The One on account of the superlative tendencies of the transcendent approach and because form is linked with *nous,* is declared to be "without form" *Enn.* V. v. 6; VI. vii. 32. This means that it is above form rather than formless.

36. For example, *Enn.* V. ii. 1.

37. *Enn.* V. i. 6.

In all these instances the productivity of the agent is understood to imply no diminution of its own substantial nature. See also A. H. Armstrong, " 'Emanation' in Plotinus," *Mind,* new series, XLVI (1937), 61–66. The belief that light was incorporeal may have made the irradiation metaphor more plausible to Plotinus than it is to us.

38. See Chapter 1.

39. *Enn.* III. vii. 11; V. ix. 6.

40. Enn. III. vii. 4, 11.

41. *Enn.* V. ii. 1.

42. This is particularly clearly expressed for the level of *nous* (cf. *Enn.* III. viii. 8; III. ii. 14; V. viii. 9). In the case of the One, the emphasis on unity tends to a stressing of its simplicity, rather than its fullness. (But see also *Enn.* V. ii. 1.)

43. *Enn.* III. viii. 9.

44. *Enn.* III. viii. 11.

45. *Enn.* V. iii. 14.

46. Cf. *Enn.* I. iv. 9 *ff.* for an interesting discussion of the relationship between happiness and consciousness.

47. See *Enn.* I. iv. 10; III. ix. 3 (p. 350, Volkmann); IV. iv. 4; V. iii. 4; viii. 11. See page 91, note 14 and the discussion on pages 54–55.

48. *Enn.* I. iii. 2, 6; I. vi; V. ix. 1.

49. In *Enn.* VI. vii. 29 Plotinus answers objections which might be made to his conception of the good from the point of view of Epicure-

anism. Plotinus himself had stated these objections, rather interestingly, in chap. 24 of the same book.

50. St. Thomas *In XII libros Metaph.*, liber I, lectio 1.

51. Paul O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, chap. x.

52. See von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, III, 31 *ff.*, frags. 127 *ff.*

53. See page 79, note 44.

54. Nietzsche speaks of Stoicism as a fast day in the aphrodisiac air of Hellenism.

55. *Enn.* I. viii. 6–7; cf. III. ii. 16.

56. *Enn.* V. ix. 1; I. vi. 8.

57. See page 78, note 34.

58. *Enn.* V. viii. 6.

59. In the identity of subject and object which are only logically distinct.

60. See page 79, note 45.

61. *Enn.* V. iii. 10; cf. V. iv. 1; V. v. 5; VI. ix. 1.

62. *Enn.* V. vi. 1.

63. *Enn.* VI. ix. 1.

64. "Who could stop the power that is capable both to rest in itself and to produce?" (*Enn.* VI. vii. 8). Cf. *Enn.* V. ii. 1.

65. Cf. *Enn.* III. vi. 7, 14.

66. *Enn.* I. viii. 10; III. vi. 8.

67. *Enn.* III. vi. 11, 19.

68. For instances of Plotinus' wavering between conceiving matter as "privation" or as "substratum" see *Enn.* I. viii. 10; II. iv. 8 *ff.*, II. v. 4–5. Similarly the descent of the psyche is ascribed both to the unfolding of its power (for example, *Enn.* IV. viii. 5) and to the presence of body (for example, *Enn.* VI. iv. 15). Cf. Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin*, p. 67: "Ainsi en changeant de point de départ, nous sommes arrivés à des conclusions tout opposées: d'un côté à une matière principe de mouvement, le logos étant immuable, de l'autre à un logos industrieux et à une matière purement passive."

69. *Enn.* I. vi. 2; III. iii. 4; V. ix. 10.

70. *Enn.* III. vi. 7; I. i. 12; II. iii. 16.

71. When Plotinus speaks of intelligible matter he clearly states that

in the intelligible realm matter is form (*Enn.* II. v. 3). But also sensuous matter when viewed as an efflux of higher realities tends to be a name for the deficiency of form.

72. A number of interpreters, such as Arnou, Fuller, Inge, Kristeller, have noted inconsistencies in Plotinus' system or at least varying perspectives. (Cf. Arnou, *Le Désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin,* pp. 186–187, and Paul O. Kristeller, *Der Begriff der Seele in der Ethik des Plotin,* pp. 5 *ff.*) These inconsistencies, it ought to be noted, have a unity of motivation. Thus the One is *both* transcendent and immanent, because to be good and complete it must be beyond the world and yet to be the good of this world it must be related to it as an originative principle. The very same search for perfection locates the highest reality beyond this world and attempts to make it continuous with it.

If the dual aspects of Plotinus' doctrines are not noted, he can be declared either a pantheist or a transcendentist, a determinist or an indeterminist, and there will be ample quotations for these and other opposed interpretations. But the correct answer in each case is that Plotinus is both or perhaps neither, if the unity of motivation of the conflicting emphases is taken into account.

IV. THE FLIGHT TO THE ALONE

1. *Enn.* VI. vii. 36; see page 87, note 31.

2. *Enn.* VI. ii, especially 8.

3. *Enn.* VI. i. 1. The Aristotelian categories are discussed *Enn.* VI. i. 1–24.

4. *Enn.* V. iii. 6 (Plotinus does not directly refer to myth in this passage). Cf. *Enn.* V. viii. 3, VI. viii. 13.

5. Cf. Sallustius, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe* iii., iv. Sallustius shares Plotinus' view (*Enn.* III. v. 9) that myth presents the eternally simultaneous in the form of genetic succession (iv, pp. 8, 14–16, of Nock's edition).

6. *Enn.* I. viii. 15; II. ix. 17.

7. *Enn.* II. ix. 16; cf. 12.

8. *Ethics,* part V, prop. 19.

9. Quoted by Paul O. Kristeller in *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino,* pp. 349–350.

10. See Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, pp. 194 *ff.*

11. See page 92, note 47.

12. *Enn.* IV. iii. 25–iv. 17.

13. *De civitate Dei* xxii. 30.

14. *Enn.* VI. v. 5.

15. *Enn.* V. iv. 1; V. ii. 1.

16. See page 92, note 39.

17. *Enn.* III. vii. 4, 11, and V. vii. 1.

18. *Enn.* II. ix. 2; IV. viii. 8; V. i. 12; ii. 1.

19. *Enn.* I. i. 11. Plotinus wavers in his conception of human individuality. In *Enn.* VI. viii. 12 he says that our self in a way has and in a way has not substantial reality. Cf. *Enn.* VI. iv. 14.

20. The duplication of the chain of realities within the psyche is one instance of Plotinus' method of hypostatizing the potential and the ideal. Such hypostatizations might well be considered quasi-materialistic in character. (Many of Plotinus' arguments become much more plausible if his hypostases are regarded as formal "causes" rather than as efficient or quasi-material causes.)

21. The nearest the psyche comes to resemble the other hypostases is in its function as mediator between the intelligible realm and the world of body. But it is difficult to see why, *ceteris paribus*, Plotinus would have found it necessary to assume a special agency to fulfill this function. *Nous* to Plotinus is endowed with life and it might have been conceived as acting directly on body without an intermediary.

22. For example, *Enn.* V. v. 12.

23. Plotinus' difficulty has its analogy in some of our temporalized conceptions of the good. Thus a number of our proponents of progress try to combine the notion of a more or less automatically assured good in the future with an emphasis on the necessity of human effort.

24. *Enn.* IV. iii. 12–18; iv. 3; vii. 13. Cf. *Enn.* IV. viii. 5 *ff.* for an interplay of the cosmological and the individualistic aspects in Plotinus' conception of the psyche.

25. *Enn.* IV. iii. 15; cf. 12 end.

26. *Enn.* I. i. 11–12.

27. *Enn.* I. i. 12 beginning.

28. *Enn.* III. iii. 4. The notion of transmigration must have been

inconvenient to Plotinus also for the reason that he assumes in some places individual intelligible exemplars for each human person (*Enn.* V. vii. 1–3).

29. *Enn.* IV. viii. 3, 5, 6.

30. *Enn.* I. vi. 8; III. vi. 5.

The ascent of the psyche is occasionally declared a return to itself whereby the dynamic implications, though still present, are somewhat weakened.

31. *Enn.* V. i. 1.

32. *Enn.* IV. viii. 3: "In directing itself to the realm superior to it, the psyche contemplates, in directing itself to itself, the psyche maintains its being, in directing itself to the things below it, the psyche orders, administers, and rules them." This passage seems to apply both to the world soul and the individual souls. (It should be kept in mind throughout that Plotinus assumes a world soul in addition to the individual souls.)

33. *Enn.* IV. iv. 17; cf. *Enn.* IV. viii. 7.

34. *Enn.* III. vi. 14, 15; II. iii. 16; ix. 6, 12; I. viii. 4; cf. *Enn.* I. i. 7, 13.

35. *Enn.* III. vii. 11; IV. viii. 4, 7; V. i. 1.

36. *Enn.* I. i. 7, 12; but see V. ix. 13 for a different view.

37. *Enn.* VI. viii. 3, 4; cf. *Enn.* IV. iv. 45; III. i. 9.

Augustine holds a view similar to that of Plotinus when he declares that the redeemed soul will have no free choice in one sense because sin will not be able to give it pleasure. Yet its liberty will be the greater because it will be freed from taking pleasure in sinning, to achieve the liberty of the indeclinable pleasure of not sinning. The transfer of this conception of liberty to the political sphere has been made popular by Rousseau.

38. This conception is never fully developed, but it is implied in all exhortations to purification and ascent as well as in the notion of the psyche's "arrogance" in descending. In both cases, however, the implicit assumption of free choice is softened by cosmological considerations (cf. *Enn.* IV. viii. 5). The attempt is made to make the "arrogance" of the psyche, which suggests moral disapproval and free choice, compatible with a conception of plenitude according to which the psyche

had to create inferior realities to develop its inherent powers. (See also *Enn.* II. iii. 9.) In *Enn.* III. iii. 4 man's freedom is asserted more strongly. But it is only beings below the level of *nous* who are assigned such freedom in *Enn.* VI. viii. 17 (cf. *Enn.* IV. vii. 5). Inferior beings, it seems, are free to choose *both* good and evil, superior beings are free to choose good alone. (See also what Plotinus says about providence, as in *Enn.* V. viii. 7.)

The two kinds of freedom are distinguished and discussed by Paul O. Kristeller in *Der Begriff der Seele in der Ethik des Plotin,* pp. 78 *ff.* See also Paul Henry, "Le Problème de la liberté chez Plotin," *Revue Néo-Scolastique de Philosophie,* 2d series, XXXIII (1931), 50–79, 180–215, 318–339. Henry ascribes the differing approaches to the problem of freedom in Plotinus particularly to a tension between "un fort courant rationalist" and "la croyance innée de Plotin à la liberté." Gordon H. Clark, "Plotinus' Theory of Empirical Responsibility," *The New Scholasticism,* XVII (1943), 16–31, defends the view that on the level of empirical responsibility Plotinus is a determinist. But it seems to me that Clark tries to make Plotinus more consistent than he is and does not recognize sufficiently Plotinus' varying emphases on this issue which were stressed by Kristeller and Henry. (There is no reference to either Kristeller's or Henry's studies in Clark's article.)

39. Plotinus' problem is well stated by himself in *Enn.* III. i. 8 where he seeks for a principle of causation that "(1) will leave nothing without a cause, (2) will preserve the connection and order of things, (3) *will permit the human self to count for something,* and (4) will not eliminate prognostications and prophecies." (Cf. *Enn.* III. ii. 4.) Even the notion of autonomy (*autexousion*) implies often a compromise between liberty and order (cf. *Enn.* IV. viii. 5; III. ii. 10; but see also *Enn.* V. i. 1).

40. Porphyry *Ad Marcellam* 29.

41. Augustine *Confessions* vii. 16; viii. 8 *ff.* Plotinus moves somewhat in the direction of Augustine when he speaks of the "arrogance" of the psyche in descending and there is, of course, rather much emphasis on aspiration in the *Enneads.* Yet these conceptions do not detract very much from the rationalist character of Plotinus' world view.

42. See Paul O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino,* p. 354.

43. Plotinus never clearly distinguishes whether the goal of ascent is extinction or fullest realization of the potentialities of the self. This is founded in his ambiguous conception of the psyche which makes it both a duplication of all reality and an individual agent. (This ambiguity also accounts for Plotinus' locating the good both inside and outside of the self.)

44. *Enn.* I. iv. 9; cf. *Enn.* V. viii. 11; III. ix. 3 (Volkmann). There are passages where Plotinus seems to assume a somewhat different view of awareness. In *Enn.* V. iv. 2 self-awareness (*synaisthesis*) is ascribed to the One. But Plotinus has a convenient principle which makes such shifts less inconsistent. The higher realities, especially the One, are both different from and the same as the lower realities. They are different because superior and they are the same in a more *eminent* way. (Cf. *Enn.* VI. ix. 6 where the supreme existence is not even called good but above good.) In *Enn.* VI. vii. 38 there is ascribed to the One a "direct apprehension of itself" (*epibole*) and in 41 it is said that "it does not perceive itself." These two statements do not conflict with each other as much as they seem, as Plotinus is looking for an awareness which does not imply a distinction between subject and object.

45. George Santayana, *Collected Works,* New York, 1936, sonnet 7, I, 218. Quoted with the permission of the publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons.

46. These are instances of Plotinus' general trend to convert moral goods into antecedent and productive existences. See Irwin Edman, "The Logic of Mysticism in Plotinus," p. 79: Plotinus "converts the summits and crises of moral, aesthetic and intellectual experience into the bases and origins of all experience and existence." Paul O. Kristeller, *Der Begriff der Seele in der Ethik des Plotin,* p. 103, concludes with regard to the position of ethics in the world view of Plotinus "im Verlauf der ganzen Untersuchung war es nirgends notwendig, ontologische Prinzipien für das Verständnis der ethischen Gedanken heranzuziehen, während sich mehr als einmal die Möglichkeit zeigte, von der Ethik aus zum Sinn der ontologischen Lehren vorzudringen." George Santayana, "Plotinus and the Nature of Evil," p. 76, calls Plotinus "a mere moralist become a metaphysician" and asserts that the moral man's "Socratic wisdom in life will become his Platonic folly in science." See also p. 80;

"The transcendence of aspiration, divining the ideal behind the actual, becomes, when reversed in a myth, an emanation of the actual from the ideal." "Plotinus could not explain the origin of evil; in fact he could not explain the origin of anything, his whole natural philosophy being unnatural, and merely a moral allegory [p. 83]."

47. Augustine *Confessions* vii. 13: "et meliora quidem superiora quam inferiora, sed meliora omnia quam sola superiora iudicio saniore pendebam."

48. See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being,* p. 67.

49. *Enn.* V. v. 13; VI. viii. 9 *ff.*

50. *Enn.* VI. vii. 1; V. viii. 7, 17.

51. See page 93, note 64.

52. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being,* especially pp. 64–66. Professor Lovejoy's quotations come from *Enn.* III. ii and iii, where Plotinus is concerned with the world of sense, not with the totality of all levels of existence. When Professor Lovejoy says that to Plotinus the world is full, he does not make clear whether he refers to the sense world, the intelligible world, or to the totality of all levels of existence.

53. *Enn.* III. ii. 14; VI. vii. 1.

54. See page 78, note 34.

55. It is even declared "overfull" in *Enn.* V. ii. 1.

56. *Enn.* VI. vii. 27.

57. *Enn.* III. iv. 1.

58. These are the emphases on co-ordination as contrasted with those counseling the flight from this world. The former almost always stress the temporary character of such co-ordination for a psyche transiently involved in the life of sense. The division between sense man and pure psyche which Plotinus occasionally, but not very strongly, makes would very easily have lent itself to more pluralistic emphases.

59. See page 95, note 17.

60. Cf. B. A. G. Fuller, "In Praise of Plotinus," *The Personalist,* XVIII (1937), 61–74; p. 73: "Christian dualism . . . has stultified the mystic aspiration. The aim of the true mystic is not merely the vision of God but union with him." But it must be noted that, on the other hand, in Christianity God becomes man which implies an exaltation of man inadmissible in Plotinus' system. Cf. A. E. Taylor, "The Philosopher

of Mysticism," *The Church Quarterly Review,* LXXXIX (1919–1920), 51–80, 79–80.

61. *Enn.* VI. vii. 25.

62. See page 94, note 9.

63. *Enn.* VI. vii. 34.

64. *Enn.* III. ii. 14. On this point again the fulfillment of the individual subtly becomes its destruction.

65. Goethe, *Faust,* 1st part (*Studierzimmer*).

V. SCIENCE, MAGIC, AND POLITICS

1. There are discussions of problems in astronomy, natural history, psychology, and other sciences in the *Enneads.* But these problems are not discussed for their own sake, but in reference to the superior levels of existence.

2. *Enn.* I. iii. 3.

3. *Enn.* I. vi. 8, 9; III. vi. 5.

4. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* i. 3.

5. *Enn.* VI. vii. 7. See also *Enn.* III. viii.

6. *Enn.* V. viii. 6. (This interpretation of the hieroglyphs seems to throw some doubt on Plotinus' alleged Egyptian origin.)

7. Including mechanics, optics, and "music" (Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 14). Porphyry adds however that Plotinus did not undertake to elaborate on these sciences.

8. Porphyry may, of course, have wanted to suggest that Plotinus' rejection of the world of sense did not stem from ignorance of it. (In general, one should be aware in reading Porphyry's biography of Plotinus that it is written by a disciple who apparently likes to lend some air of mystification to the memory of his master. Porphyry also makes sure that the reader will not miss the significance of his own role as the friend and disciple of Plotinus.)

9. They would no longer have that impassibility (*apatheia*) Plotinus argues for in *Enn.* III. vi.

10. *Enn.* III. i. 8.

11. *Enn.* IV. iv. 44.

12. Prayer is inefficacious with regard to the beings above. It has—

like magic—influence in the world of sense (*Enn.* IV. iv. 38, 40, 41). This view of prayer of course well fits in with Plotinus' impersonal conception of the universe.

13. Gilbert Murray calls him "singularly aloof" (*Five Stages of Greek Religion,* New York, 1925, p. 183).

14. See the discussion in *Enn.* IV. iv. 30–45 and also Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 10.

15. *Enn.* II. ix. 14.

16. *Enn.* II. iii. 6.

17. *Enn.* III. i. 6.

18. *Enn.* III. i. 5. Cf. Augustine *Confessions* vii. 6 for an experimental refutation of astrology.

19. *Enn.* III. i. 6; II. iii. 12.

20. *Enn.* II. iii. 14.

21. *Enn.* II. iii. 8; III. i. 6.

22. *Enn.* IV. iv. 37, 40, 43.

23. *Enn.* IV. iv. 32, 40, 45.

24. *Enn.* III. viii. 2.

25. See page 93, note 67.

26. *Enn.* IV. iv. 43.

27. *Enn.* IV. iv. 40, 43. See also Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 10.

28. *Enn.* I. i.

29. *Enn.* I. i. 7, 12.

30. *Enn.* IV. iv. 28; I. i. 5.

31. *Enn.* IV. iv. 20, 21.

32. *Enn.* IV. iii. 32.

33. For instance, *Enn.* I. i. 5 end where Plotinus raises the question whether it is the prior disposition of the body which gives rise to emotion (a familiar enough question of course in the Aristotelian tradition). In the same chapter Plotinus expresses disagreement with the Stoics who had intellectualized the emotions.

34. *Enn.* IV. iii. 32; iv. 2.

35. *Enn.* IV. vii. 8; IV. iii. 20, 26; V. i. 10.

36. We can well imagine that discussions of the relation of psyche to body must have been long and laborious. Porphyry *De Vita Plotini* 13 reports one that lasted for three days.

37. *Enn.* VI. vii. 34. The Stoics already had set the precedent for this re-introduction of apparently rejected emotions under different names. Thus the term *eupatheia* was used by the Stoics to disguise the re-introduction of the emotions which seemed excluded by the emphasis upon *apatheia* and the intellectualist conception of virtue (see also page 82, note 6).

38. See Max Wundt, *Plotin,* Leipzig, 1919, chapter 2; A. Alföldi, "Die Vorherrschaft der Pannonier im Römerreiche und die Reaktion des Hellenentums unter Gallienus," p. 28, where it is said, with references to Wundt and Heinemann, that Plotinus in the last years of Gallienus descended "von den Höhen der abstrakten Spekulation" in order to concentrate "auf die Lösung der brennenden Zeitfragen."

39. *De vita Plotini* 12.

40. The Gnostics' doctrines are distinguished from those of the Greeks in *Enn.* II. ix. 6.

41. Cf. Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 9.

42. *Enn.* II. ix. 15.

43. *Enn.* II. ix. 16–18.

44. *Enn.* II. ix. 12.

45. Cf. *Enn.* II. ix. 15; III. ii. 8. See also page 90, note 5.

46. Perhaps one should say "moral order." *Nomous* in *Enn.* II. ix. 15 is probably best translated with Bréhier "lois de notre universe."

47. See *Enn.* III. ii. 15. In *Enn.* III. ii. 8 Plotinus says that too much importance is given to the problem of injustice; man is not the highest being in the universe. Cf. also *Enn.* II. ix. 4.

48. Alföldi, I believe, maintains that much of the fury of the anti-Christian persecutions can be ascribed to the fact that they were regarded as rebels against the established order. (Augustine's *City of God* is in part a defense against this charge.)

49. Cf. what Plotinus is reported to have said about his wards (Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 9).

50. *Enn.* III. ii. 9 where Plotinus discourages reform, as it were, *a priori.* See also page 79, note 45. In *Enn.* IV. iv. 43. Plotinus asserts that the life of *praxis* subjects one necessarily to the influence of magic.

51. *Enn.* III. viii. 4.

52. *Enn.* III. ii. 8.

53. *Enn.* III. ii. 8; note particularly his assertion that "the evil rule on account of the unmanliness of the ruled." Some further echoes of actual political conditions might be contained in the somewhat bitter descriptions of politics in *Enn.* III. ii. 8, 15 (cf. also *Enn.* I. iv. 7). But such descriptions had also become the stock-in-trade of philosophers and need not reflect particular conditions.

54. *De vita Plotini* 12.

55. *De vita Plotini* 12; *nomois Platonos* does not necessarily mean the *Laws* of Plato, as Wundt, *Plotin,* p. 39, assumes.

56. Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 9.

57. Bréhier, *Ennéades,* I, xiii.

58. Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 7, 12.

59. *De vita Plotini* 7.

60. Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 2. It is interesting to compare a more negative attitude towards worldly goods in *Enn.* I. iv. 14 with a more positive one in *Enn.* II. ix. 18 where this world is likened to a temporary domicile criticism of which, while one lives in it, is idle; all that is required is not to lose one's direction towards the higher. But it is quite possible that there is no great shift of emphasis in the two passages. In *Enn.* II. ix. 18 Plotinus may simply be arguing against an excessive concern with this world (and incidentally also express an implicit conservatism).

61. Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 9.

62. *Enn.* II. ix. 9.

63. *Enn.* II. ix. 9: "The life of the common crowd whose function it is like servants to satisfy the necessary wants of their betters." What is a "necessary want" can, of course, be interpreted to one's advantage, even if it is only the maintenance of an intellectualist asceticism.

64. Cf. George Santayana, "Plotinus and the Nature of Evil," p. 68: "Not that the philosophers would have been unwilling to make themselves comfortable in the world and to govern it . . . but the ruffians, christened and unchristened, had got out of hand and would not let them. To the ruffians, accordingly, they sadly abandoned the world, and turned to chastening their unused passions and pondering on supernatural things."

65. See Wundt, *Plotin*, pp. 43 *ff*.
66. *Enn.* III. ii. 15; I. iv. 7.
67. Porphyry *De vita Plotini* 8.
68. He is, of course, aware of his pedagogical role. Cf. *Enn.* VI. ix. 4.

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